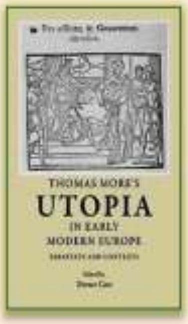
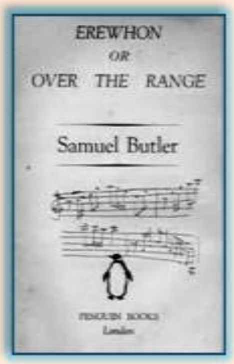






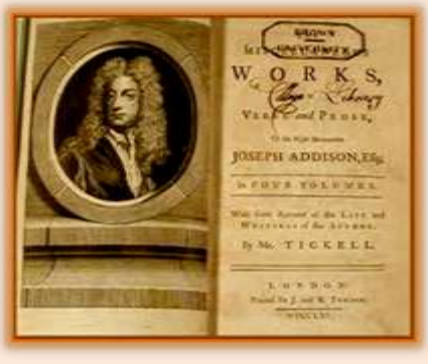


The English Essay: A Compendium.

compiled by **C. George Sandulescu**

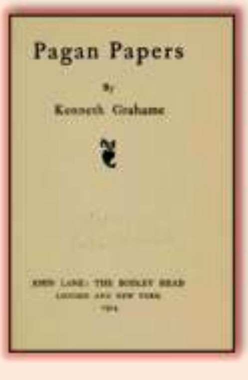
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edited by **Lidia Vianu**









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We gratefully acknowledge that:

the Burgess Article "Grunts form a Sexist Pig" is taken from the book *Homage to Qwert Yuitop*. Essays by Anthony Burgess, published by Hutchinson of London in 1986. 589 pages.

C.P. Snow's essay *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution. The Rede Lecture* was published by Cambridge University Press 1959.

F.R. Leavis's essay *Two Cultures? The Significance of C. P. Snow. The Richmond Lecture* was published by Chatto and Windus Ltd. 1962.

THE PLUS-25 ENGLISH-AUTHOR CHRONOLOGY.

Listing: my long-term wish.

I have always wanted to know, exactly and precisely, how long an author had lived, and his likely company when he had barely completed his formative years. Now I have found a device by means of which my lifelong dream has been fulfilled. Certain half-decades, ie: batches of five years, eg: 1840-45, are ever so rich in famous names…

This Chronology starts from 1503 (with Author at 25), and ends in 1942 (with implied dates of Death of Author in the nineties..). (First date records Year when Author was25; the second the number of years he lived.)
Afterwards most other dates can be more easily extracted, eg:
(1833-25=1808) (1808+60=1868) ,i.e.:

The Anthony Burgess full Cartouche is: 1942-25=1917,date of birth; then,1917+75=1992, which is the date of death.)

C. G. S

The English Essay: A Compendium.

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and
edited by **Lidia Vianu**

Bucharest 2011

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N.B. The BackBone of the whole Listing is the Year when all writers were 25, and finishing studies, started writing Essays.

N.B. The Memorable Statements, Worthy of Further Attention, have been Highlighted in Red by the Editors.

+25y of age!

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APPENDIX.

The Philosophy of Literary Genres:
THE ESSAY.

I emphatically maintain that THE ESSAY is a distinct and fairly well-defined literary genre in English Literature. I equally emphatically maintain that The Essay is not at all that in Rumanian Literature. (In French Literature the situation is debatable... There are the peaks of Essay-Writing, like Montaigne, or Pascal. But it was never cultivated as a genre. Systematically, frequently, and steadily over time). Not the English way, anyhow.

The situation is similar in Rumania. But without the French-style peaks, the situation is even more difficult to assess. The Continent never had a Charles Lamb, or a De Quincey, or, to start with, perhaps, a Francis Bacon. (Thomas More was so much taken with Utopian thinking, that there is little connection between him and Bacon.)

And if there had been any budding essay-writers in Rumania—like Dragoş Protopopescu—the Communists were more than delighted when they disappeared from the literary scene in one way or another...

The genre is difficult to define and delineate. Noica is not an essay-writer: because he is a born, well-trained, and much-devoted philosopher. Nor is George Călinescu, who is a mere literary historian, and literary critic (in spite of his airs of *Besserwisser*...). Vlahuță and Hogaş are basically travellers, and what they produce is travel notes. Like Charles Dickens, who wrote ***American Notes*** (translated by Mihnea Gheorghiu, and presented as a great work of art), or his earlier ***Notes from Italy***...

So, we are still left with the fundamental question: What exactly is an Essay? Particularly in English literature. And to a certain extent in French literature. And to a far lesser extent in Rumanian literature.

Sometimes the essay creeps into the Novel. George Eliot's ***Daniel Deronda*** is ultimately an essay, written by a novelist. Mircea Eliade was so vey fond, from early youth, of Giovanni Papini (who was himself a good personal friend of Benito Mussolini...). So much so, that my own favourite books as a teen-ager, and I can say throughout my life have been Papini's ***Un Uomo Finito*** (translated into Rumanian by Eliade himself), and the novel ***Gog*** (so hated by the Communists...). Well, ***Gog***—ultimately a quotation from the Bible—is a clever sequence of essays, disguised as a novel. Which in turn is a clever disguise for a sequence of imaginary interviews (in much the same way Walter Savage Landor wrote ***Imaginary Conversations***).

This, then, is another problem with the Essay: **the deliberate disguise**. It looks as if naked ideas are so shameful, and so very objectionable that they have to be hidden away, under a lot of straw in a barn, or like older and fattish women at an Italian Fashion Parade: *elles dovent être pimpantes, à tout prix*, in order to be able, on the cat walk, to catch the eye of covetous old men... who mean business. But enough of Papini, and More, and George Eliot and Thomas More, and the lot of stowaway specialists.

The Essay, much more than the novel, is **an idea-carrier**. And ideas, just like the professional lives of very beautiful women and olympic athletes must necessarily be short and to the point. And more than anything else, "the point must be inside!". And it must be very well made. In order to achieve the desired effect. In that sense, the champions in English remain, to me, Charles Lamb and Aldous Huxley.

But name-dropping is no good, if you do not read them by the hour, for days on end. And above all, Bacon, and Montaigne, and Pascal. I kept going back to them in the difficult moments of my life, and such moments were not just a handful, to be

counted on all the fingers of an average husband and wife with three grown-up children, I can tell you that!

The function of the great essay is **to stabilize thinking**. To give it substance, and a sense of direction. And most certainly to instil **confidence in one's own way of thinking**. Henry David Thoreau was absolutely right when he was promoting the idea of "a majority of one". That helped me get rid of Communism with the drastic cut of a hatchet. And Emerson was right with his emphasis on books, in a world in which he was surrounded by too many Texas guns... and New York banks.

Thinking straight is no easy task. And that is what is clearly missing in practically all the newspapers in the PostCommunist territories of Eastern Europe. Rumanians from California keep telling me, "We read what is being written in today's Rumania very dutifully, but we cannot quite make out what they genuinely mean..." Why is that? Because the disastrous Communist + Bureaucratic disease of **Fuzzy Thinking** lingers on most persistently. So very persistently that it will certainly take another quarter-century to get it right. Inside the head. And I must admit that I am making an optimistic assessment.

And that is where the essay will help. **Think straight**. **Think honest**. **Think truth**. **Think to the point**. Above all, leave aside material gain in proper thinking. (With so many overnight millionaires settling in Monte Carlo, this is no joke: and they are Russians and Rumanians.) Above all, therefore, **Think clean, and clear**. **Think selfless**. At least to begin with. **Look Reality in the face**. (Not the distorted and twisted way the Communists had taught us to do for a solid half-century.) Think instead the way Francis Bacon and Montaigne did so many hundreds of years ago. And leave aside ego-centrism. At least for as long as you are on this job.

It is the English Essay that will teach you that. Read three essays non-stop by Francis Bacon—they are all so very short—and you will be more than convinced of the point that I am trying to make.

There is not much time for philosophy, in order to convince you. So, we resort to dogma. When I hear a politician speaking about moral rectitude, I change the

radio or television station: for **bureaucrats can only be circumstantial**. Like solicitors, and accountants, and the doctors addressing terminal patients: they all have their diplomatic code of circumstantiality, of the half-empty bottle magically and suddenly turning half-full. And sometimes even overflowing...

There you have, in the bud, the issue of Drastic Change. "**They got 'im, they shot 'im!**" That is the common denominator between Nicky Ceausesco, and Sadam Hussein, and Ben Laden. '**Obama got Ossama**' may well summarise the Bush+Bush Age, bringing it to a possible close. And the newspaper title "**Why did it take so long?**" (though less flashy as a title) summarises such situations even better.

It is to get away from The Spirit of the Age—in order to better understand—what IT (i.e. The Spirit of the Age) really means to us, who live in it, that we need **The Essay**. We need it badly to re-learn how TO THINK. On our own two feet. Read Huxley's ***I am a HighBrow***, and you will understand. Try to find Gilbert Frankau's ***I am a LowBrow***, and you will understand even better. (Properly organised **Debating Societies** have functioned in the British Isles for a long, long time—perhaps since the days Oxford & Cambridge were set up. Never have they existed in the same way in other countries. They may have well contributed to the production of Essays...)

Study the '**Two Cultures**' Controversy of the 1960's between Dr Leavis and C. P. Snow, and you will see that the argument between them has great relevance today: it functions even better in our days...

Above all, study **Samuel Butler** about the Machines to see that he had predicted how Japan would more than suddenly go under the calm waters of the most Pacific of Oceans; you will see that he is even more topical than even he himself had imagined. I discussed the matter in November with His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco (a world specialist on the subject), who admitted that Ecology suddenly acquires a new dimension, taking Samuel Butler into account... who first discussed the subject 150 years ago. To say nothing of **George Orwell**, and his reflections on Language, paradoxically written the very year the awful Groza

Government came to power in Rumania. Ever since, our Language is different. Everywhere.

To conclude, I posit the question again: "What is a (literary) Essay?"

Here is what some of the specialist definitions say:

We begin with **Beckson & Ganz:** *A Reader's Guide to Literary Terms* (1961 : 62).
We continue with **Cassell**'s *Encyclopaedia of World literature* (1953 / 1973 : 217).
We will end with **Cuddon**'s *Dictionary of Literary Terms* (1976 / 1979 : 244), the most recent of all (comparatively speaking). All three books have been published in London.

Beckson & Ganz: A short composition which is usually in prose (Pope's ***An Essay on Man*** and ***An Essay on Criticism*** are exceptions) and which discusses, either formally or informally, one or more topics. Such essays as those in the ***Characters*** of Theophrastus or in the ***Meditations*** of Marcus Aurelius were well known in the ancient world, but the term **essai** ("attempt") was first applied to the form by Montaigne when he published a volume of informal pieces in 1580. Seventeen years later, Francis Bacon used the English word **essay** to describe his brief philosophic discourses. Montaigne, intimate, informal, and graceful, and Bacon, dogmatic, formal, and expository, illustrate the range of the essay. With the development of periodicals, the essay became a popular form, and such writers as Addison, Steele, Lamb, Hazlitt, Pater, and Beerbohm made it their major concern.

Cassell: [...] The year 1580 is generally accepted as the date of birth of the essay. To be sure there have been many who would trace the essay right back to Antiquity [...] . They maintain that Plato, Plutarch, Lucian, Cicero, and Seneca are already essayists [...]

The difficulties of historical pin-pointing are obvious. If a new literary genre such as the essay has its origin in the individuality of the author it

must of necessity be highly variable and in the last analysis cannot be objectively fixed in a historical context. This is already proved by the second great name in the history of the modern essay, Sir Francis Bacon. Only in his continual striving after textual perfection does Bacon resemble Montaigne. [...] Bacon's last edition of 1625 contains 58 essays. [...] During the 18th century it became increasingly clear that the essay had not only a critical and emancipatory, but also a mediating and levelling function. This double function was linked to the development of the essay right down and into the 20th century, for it was the journals which unfolded thematically the whole canvas of life's problems and phenomena.

[...] In spite of the important contributions of France and Germany, however, England remained throughout the 19th century the country of the essay ***par excellence***. The fact that essayists of rank were now also emerging in the United States made no difference, particularly as these were very strongly influenced by the English essay and were mostly orientated towards Europe.

Cuddon: A composition, usually in prose (Pope's ***Moral Essays*** in verse were an exception), which may be of only a few hundred words (like Bacon's ***Essays***) or of book length (like Locke's ***Essay Concerning Human Understanding***) and which discusses, formally or informally, a topic or a variety of topics. It is one of the most flexible and adaptable of all literary forms.

Monaco, Zece Mai 2011

C. George SANDULESCU

C. George Sandulescu

On Spelling.

A Sample Essay Written for Teaching Purposes.

Rumanian is now a European language. I mean by that that it is now spoken in Brussels. Formally and officially. And what is Brussels? What a question!

From Brussels sprouts Europe's HeadQuarters, of course. Its brains are all there. The rest of Brussels—and of Europe, for that matter—becomes rather insignificant by the side of the huge and imposing size of the Building there.

It is There that Rumanian is both spoken and written. And this is my starting point.

First and foremost, **the very name of the country**... Once upon a time, and a very good time it was, without wars and uniforms of all kinds, the country had three different names in English, all running parallel. These names were ***Rumania***, ***Roumania***, and, lastly, ***Romania***.

Everybody on the continent of Europe, in the days when Brussels did not exist, was using the very first form—**Rumania**. No discussion about it. The second

was the frenchified version in English, and as such considered rather upper-class, somewhat aristocratic, and definitely old-fashioned. The last form—**Romania**—was clearly American, and as such, all Europeans of common sense dismissed it without further ado.

But in the meantime the Americans were told to go to Europe once again. For the Second War. The Second World War, that they used to call WW2, for short. And they brought with them all the Americanisms, from chewing-gum to Lucky Strike and Phillip Morris. To say nothing of Kent, the refrigerators and the artificial lung (for the young daughter of Gheron Netta, if you happen to remember the Bucharest newspapers of the early spring of 1945).

The spelling situation stayed the same after the war for another twenty years or so. Until the Chinese had a brilliant idea at the United Nations, in New York. Which had forcibly been moved there by the Americans (for Geneva—where Titulescu had initially put it—, and the neutral Swiss, were a bit of a security risk). And after all, New York was much nearer to all the important corners of the world. And had far better airports, and staff who spoke better English, and so on...

It was in the early 1960's that the Chinese suddenly realized that their own capital was not called Peking. Now, in New York it was easier to hit the British colonialists, for it was them who had called it so. Internationally. From London, which had for a long time been the capital of the world.

So the Chinese solemnly proclaimed from the rostrum of the United Nations—loud and clear—that they have changed their Capital city. Henceforth, their capital formally and officially moved to ***Beijing***. Which was a more democratic place. More in line with the will of the people.

It was all so like the very first Book of the Bible: "And Beijing saith it is alive, and it becomes so. Everywhere." Except in France. Who had always been on the impish side, to a cosiderable degree. It was only the French who put all their feet simultaneously down, and Peking stayed Peking forever in their own language.

Which was French. A decidedly international language. Even for the Olympic games of the other year...

This gave ideas to the Indians too, who after a shorter or longer while—I cannot quite well remember—decided that Bombay too, should move to Mumbay. For it would be as democratic and anti-colonial to be so. And the Indians let the British keep Bombay to themselves. But the British, in their great spirit of tolerance and magnanimity, conceded to the change. But not the French. The devil in them was indeed doing the devil's work.

It was in this atmosphere of democratic tension that Old Nick came to power in what the French called "Le Petit Paris des Balkans". And what is his first move? Being very democratic himself, he proceeded to ask the English of his country to vote themselves for their English name. **I was there myself**. In the English Department. The only one place in the country where English was being taught at university level. And Reader Ana Cartianu was the Head of the Department, and conducted the Staff Meeting (she was still too young, and new to the job, to be appointed a full Professor).

And she had received the order from the Rumanian Academy, the Central Committee, and even perhaps from the President N.C. of the country himself, to have a vote in the Department, and decide firmly, drastically and democratically, once and for all, on one of the three English spellings. Just because the country was going international (and moving away from Moscow. Slowly towards Buckingham Palace...). And the result was unanimous: **everybody in the Department voted for the existing British spelling**, which was **Rumania**.

So, it was only natural that the decision of the President and of the Central Committee came in support of the Spelling with a big O, namely ROMANIA. (The argument was that the RO spelling had been used for a long time by the National Railways, and was the word written on the trucks and lorries going abroad.)

And that was the long and short of the story: by Presidential Decree RUMANIA became ROMANIA in the early 1960's. Even in NEW YORK. Where it had always been like that anyhow. And Roma was not at all pleased. Then and now.

I for one still have my great doubts about Americanising a very healthy European word. But orders were orders in those days.

Tuesday Zece Mai 2011.

(In my next sample **Essay**, on the very same subject, I shall be taking up the Rumanian Spelling reform of September 1953. It landed on my brains and right hand when I was barely a first-year student of English, with the Rumanian language imposed *ex officio* on me as a second obligatory specialisation from very high up...)

'The Essay' Has Changed the World.

The English Essay. A Compendium is a book of non-fiction. It is a guide to thinking, compiled for students born in former communist countries after the fall of communism. It is an attempt at teaching young minds to be honest to themselves when they think. Not to hide behind words.

Communism has left us all with a heavy legacy: wooden language and self-censorship. Fiction and poetry may have had a way out – a meagre one, but still – under Communist dictatorships. Clear thinking, expressed in clear words, on the other hand, was erased.

For half a century, the writers learnt how to hide, in inventive, roundabout ways, what everyone – even the zealots of the establishment – really thought. Censored books were published in a huge number of copies, and spread forcefully all over the place. Literature, at its best, was schizophrenic. Whether it paid lip service to the régime or not is a question we cannot answer in few words or too soon.

Most of the texts in this Essay Compendium appear for the first time after Communism on Romanian soil. Communism refused to publish many of these authors, who were all considered bourgeois. Matthew Arnold was considered bourgeois. Hilaire Belloc was considered bourgeois. G.K. Chesterton was considered bourgeois. Anthony Burgess was thought to be downright reactionary.

These four hundred pages are a memento. They are trying to mend what Communism has profoundly damaged: the ability of the mind to think for itself, to communicate thoughts clearly, briefly and to the point. In the process, they also

reveal that thoughts can be passionate, that thinking is a way of life, a calling that never ends, and from which the real thinker does not desist even while asleep. As Eliot put it,

> So here I am, in the middle way, having had twenty years—
> Twenty years largely wasted, the years of *l'entre deux guerres*
> Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt
> Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure...

This is a text-book which, first of all, pleads for *sincerity of thinking*. It urges its readers, quite in line with the famous Shakespeare quotation, "To thine own self be true!" In other words, it fights clichés and wooden language. Among other things, it teaches the communication of ideas in writing situations. Many of the texts in it have been abridged for lack of space. If you are interested in the complete versions, you will have to find them for yourselves. The essays we have selected here are an invitation to think. The editors are even suggesting passages to insist on, which are marked in red.

We aim at a bilingual Compendium. We are prepared to publish any good quality translations by the side of the originals that we have. Those readers who are interested in translating them are kindly invited to contact the editors.

You may find here essays that catch your eye. You may feel that the divergence of opinion between Aldous Huxley – who professes to be a 'highbrow' – and Gilbert Frankau – who declares himself a 'lowbrow' – has not yet been solved to your satisfaction, so you may want to prolong the debate by writing down your own opinion. You may even notice that the very translation of the two words, *highbrow* and *lowbrow*, has not yet been found, as far as Romanian is concerned. The editors are envisaging a volume of comments in the margin of these essays, to be published at a later date, and you are of course invited to join us.

On the other hand, you may realize you have your own ideas on politics, when you read Thomas More's *Utopia*. You may approve or disapprove of Jonathan

Swift's sarcasm as to human society in *A Modest Proposal*. You may find something to add to Charles Lamb's idea that Shakespeare's plays should not be staged, but read only. You may be a poet yourself, and in that case, E.A. Poe's idea to write 'The Philosophy of Composition' might persuade you to try your hand at the psychology of the mysterious act of creation. If history as the origin of many delicate contemporary issues is among your favourite topics, you may enjoy reading the excerpt we publish from George Eliot's novel *Daniel Deronda* – and you may feel tempted to write your own interpretation of history.

Most certainly Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, which is present in this volume with several chapters on *machines*, will make you take a stand: this stand could be the beginning of a very interesting essay, which could eventually raise a controversy as well known as that between C.P. Snow and F.R. Leavis concerning 'the two cultures' – a subject that will never lose its immediacy.

The statement "love at its most profound is silent", which you are bound to find out in Hilaire Belloc's 'Conversation with a Cat', may prompt you to state the opposite. If you have any curiosity left as to how Communism operated via communication through language, what wooden language generally means and if it ever really disappears, you may feel like prolonging George Orwell's 1946 'Politics and the English Language', and updating it with your remarks on the present-day documents of this or that political, cultural, social body.

Last but not least, who could resist Anthony Burgess's contagious pleasure to oppose feminism, as we find it in 'Grunts form a Sexist Pig'? Most certainly you all have a position of your own in at least one of these matters. Now is the time to voice it, and we will make it known.

The aim of this volume, then, is to teach young minds that they cannot feel fully alive unless they use thoughts and words in order to understand their own lives. It offers non-fiction in order to prove that, whatever text comes out of our attempt to express who we are, whether fiction, poetry or essay, stands no chance unless we learn methodically how to discipline our ideas and clarify our way of

thinking through language. That is why *The English Essay. A Compendium* brings readers four hundred years of essay-writing: to prove that there is more to the essay than a vague opinion or sloppy writing. Much more. Romania may not have had such a long tradition in essay-writing, and you may not be very happy with the fate of the essay today, at the hands of your contemporaries. Yours could become the essay that has changed the world...

1 June 2011, Bucharest **Lidia VIANU**

1503. Sir Thomas **MORE**. (1478-1535)

(extract) *Utopia*. written ?1515.

Book I

Discourses of Raphael Hythloday, of the Best State of a Commonwealth.

"Though to speak plainly my real sentiments, I must freely own that as long as there is any property, and while money is the standard of all other things, I cannot think that a nation can be governed either justly or happily: not justly, because the best things will fall to the share of the worst men; nor happily, because all things will be divided among a few (and even these are not in all respects happy), the rest being left to be absolutely miserable. Therefore when I reflect on the wise and good constitution of the Utopians – among whom all things are so well governed, and with so few laws; where virtue hath its due reward, and yet there is such an equality, that every man lives in plenty – when I compare with them so many other nations that are still making new laws, and yet can never bring their constitution to a right regulation, where notwithstanding everyone has his property; yet all the laws that they can invent have not the power either to obtain or preserve it, or even to enable men certainly to distinguish what is their own from what is another's; of which the many lawsuits that every day break out, and are eternally depending, give too plain a demonstration; when, I say, I balance all these things in my thoughts, I grow more favourable to Plato, and do not wonder that he resolved not to make any laws for such as would not submit to a community of all things: for so wise a man could not but foresee that the setting all upon a level was the only way to make a nation happy, which cannot be obtained so long as there is property: for when every man

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draws to himself all that he can compass, by one title or another, it must needs follow, that how plentiful soever a nation may be, yet a few dividing the wealth of it among themselves, the rest must fall into indigence.

"So that there will be two sorts of people among them, who deserve that their fortunes should be interchanged; the former useless, but wicked and ravenous; and the latter, who by their constant industry serve the public more than themselves, sincere and modest men. From whence I am persuaded, that till property is taken away there can be no equitable or just distribution of things, nor can the world be happily governed: for as long as that is maintained, the greatest and the far best part of mankind will be still oppressed with a load of cares and anxieties. I confess without taking it quite away, those pressures that lie on a great part of mankind may be made lighter; but they can never be quite removed. For if laws were made to determine at how great an extent in soil, and at how much money every man must stop, to limit the prince that he might not grow too great, and to restrain the people that they might not become too insolent, and that none might factiously aspire to public employments; which ought neither to be sold, nor made burdensome by a great expense; since otherwise those that serve in them would be tempted to reimburse themselves by cheats and violence, and it would become necessary to find out rich men for undergoing those employments which ought rather to be trusted to the wise – these laws, I say, might have such effects, as good diet and care might have on a sick man, whose recovery is desperate: they might allay and mitigate the disease, but it could never be quite healed, nor the body politic be brought again to a good habit, as long as property remains; and it will fall out as in a complication of diseases, that by applying a remedy to one sore, you will provoke another; and that which removes the one ill symptom produces others, while the strengthening one part of the body weakens the rest."

"On the contrary," answered I, "it seems to me that men cannot live conveniently where all things are common: how can there be any plenty, where every man will excuse himself from labour? For as the hope of gain doth not excite

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him, so the confidence that he has in other men's industry may make him slothful: if people come to be pinched with want, and yet cannot dispose of anything as their own; what can follow upon this but perpetual sedition and bloodshed, especially when the reverence and authority due to magistrates fall to the ground? For I cannot imagine how that can be kept up among those that are in all things equal to one another."

"I do not wonder," said he, "that it appears so to you, since you have no notion, or at least no right one, of such a constitution: but if you had been in Utopia with me, and had seen their laws and rules, as I did, for the space of five years, in which I lived among them; and during which time I was so delighted with them, that indeed I should never have left them, if it had not been to make the discovery of that new world to the Europeans; you would then confess that you had never seen a people so well constituted as they."

"You will not easily persuade me," said Peter, "that any nation in that new world is better governed than those among us. For as our understandings are not worse than theirs, so our government, if I mistake not, being more ancient, a long practice has helped us to find out many conveniences of life: and some happy chances have discovered other things to us, which no man's understanding could ever have invented."

"As for the antiquity, either of their government or of ours," said he, "you cannot pass a true judgment of it unless you had read their histories; for if they are to be believed, they had towns among them before these parts were so much as inhabited. And as for those discoveries, that have been either hit on by chance, or made by ingenious men, these might have happened there as well as here. I do not deny but we are more ingenious than they are, but they exceed us much in industry and application. They knew little concerning us before our arrival among them; they call us all by a general name of the nations that lie beyond the equinoctial line; for their chronicle mentions a shipwreck that was made on their coast 1,200 years ago; and that some Romans and Egyptians that were in the ship, getting safe ashore,

spent the rest of their days among them; and such was their ingenuity, that from this single opportunity they drew the advantage of learning from those unlooked-for guests, and acquired all the useful arts that were then among the Romans, and which were known to these shipwrecked men: and by the hints that they gave them, they themselves found out even some of those arts which they could not fully explain; so happily did they improve that accident, of having some of our people cast upon their shore.

"But if such an accident has at any time brought any from thence into Europe, we have been so far from improving it, that we do not so much as remember it; as in after-times perhaps it will be forgot by our people that I was ever there. For though they from one such accident made themselves masters of all the good inventions that were among us; yet I believe it would be long before we should learn or put in practice any of the good institutions that are among them. And this is the true cause of their being better governed, and living happier than we, though we come not short of them in point of understanding or outward advantages."

Upon this I said to him: "I earnestly beg you would describe that island very particularly to us. Be not too short, but set out in order all things relating to their soil, their rivers, their towns, their people, their manners, constitution, laws, and, in a word, all that you imagine we desire to know. And you may well imagine that we desire to know everything concerning them, of which we are hitherto ignorant."

"I will do it very willingly," said he, "for I have digested the whole matter carefully; but it will take up some time."

"Let us go then," said I, "first and dine, and then we shall have leisure enough."

He consented. We went in and dined, and after dinner came back and sat down in the same place. I ordered my servants to take care that none might come and interrupt us. And both Peter and I desired Raphael to be as good as his word.

1586. Sir Francis **BACON**. (1561-1626)

Of Cunning. written ?1597.

We take cunning for a sinister or crooked wisdom. And certainly there is a great difference, between a cunning man, and a wise man; not only in point of honesty, but in point of ability. There be, that can pack the cards, and yet cannot play well; so there are some that are good in canvasses and factions, that are otherwise weak men. Again, it is one thing to understand persons, and another thing to understand matters; for many are perfect in men's humours, that are not greatly capable of the real part of business; which is the constitution of one that hath studied men, more than books. Such men are fitter for practice, than for counsel; and they are good, but in their own alley: turn them to new men, and they have lost their aim; so as the old rule, to know a fool from a wise man, *Mitte ambos nudos ad ignotos, et videbis*, doth scarce hold for them. And because these cunning men, are like haberdashers of small wares, it is not amiss to set forth their shop.

It is a point of cunning, to wait upon him with whom you speak, with your eye; as the Jesuits give it in precept: for there be many wise men, that have secret hearts, and transparent countenances. Yet this would be done with a demure abasing of your eye, sometimes, as the Jesuits also do use.

Another is, that when you have anything to obtain, of present despatch, you entertain and amuse the party, with whom you deal, with some other discourse; that he be not too much awake to make objections. I knew a counsellor and secretary, that never came to Queen Elizabeth of England, with bills to sign, but he would always first put her into some discourse of estate, that she mought the less mind the bills.

The like surprise may be made by moving things, when the party is in haste, and cannot stay to consider advisedly of that is moved.

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If a man would cross a business, that he doubts some other would handsomely and effectually move, let him pretend to wish it well, and move it himself in such sort as may foil it.

The breaking off, in the midst of that one was about to say, as if he took himself up, breeds a greater appetite in him with whom you confer, to know more.

And because it works better, when anything seemeth to be gotten from you by question, than if you offer it of yourself, you may lay a bait for a question, by showing another visage, and countenance, than you are wont; to the end to give occasion, for the party to ask, what the matter is of the change? As Nehemiah did; *And I had not before that time, been sad before the king*.

In things that are tender and unpleasing, it is good to break the ice, by some whose words are of less weight, and to reserve the more weighty voice, to come in as by chance, so that he may be asked the question upon the other's speech: as Narcissus did, relating to Claudius the marriage of Messalina and Sillies.

In things that a man would not be seen in himself, it is a point of cunning, to borrow the name of the world; as to say, The world says, or There is a speech abroad.

I knew one that, when he wrote a letter, he would put that, which was most material, in the postscript, as if it had been a by-matter.

I knew another that, when he came to have speech, he would pass over that, that he intended most; and go forth, and come back again, and speak of it as of a thing, that he had almost forgot.

Some procure themselves, to be surprised, at such times as it is like the party that they work upon, will suddenly come upon them; and to be found with a letter in their hand, or doing somewhat which they are not accustomed; to the end, they may be apposed of those things, which of themselves they are desirous to utter.

It is a point of cunning, to let fall those words in a man's own name, which he would have another man learn, and use, and thereupon take advantage. I knew two, that were competitors for the secretary's place in Queen Elizabeth's time, and yet

kept good quarter between themselves; and would confer, one with another, upon the business; and the one of them said, That to be a secretary, in the *declination of a monarchy*, was a ticklish thing, and that he did not affect it: the other straight caught up those words, and discoursed with divers of his friends, that he had no reason to desire to be secretary, in the *declination of a monarchy*. The first man took hold of it, and found means it was told the Queen; who, hearing of a *declination of a monarchy*, took it so ill, as she would never after hear of the other's suit.

There is a cunning, which we in England call, *the turning of the cat in the pan*; which is, when that which a man says to another, he lays it as if another had said it to him. And to say truth, it is not easy, when such a matter passed between two, to make it appear from which of them it first moved and began.

It is a way that some men have, to glance and dart at others, by justifying themselves by negatives; as to say, *This I do not*; as Timelines did towards Burghs, *Se non divers as spas, seed incolumitatem imperatoris simpliciter spectare*.

Some have in readiness so many tales and stories, as there is nothing they would insinuate, but they can wrap it into a tale; which serveth both to keep themselves more in guard, and to make others carry it with more pleasure. It is a good point of cunning, for a man to shape the answer he would have, in his own words and propositions; for it makes the other party stick the less.

It is strange how long some men will lie in wait to speak somewhat they desire to say; and how far about they will fetch; and how many other matters they will beat over, to come near it. It is a thing of great patience, but yet of much use.

A sudden, bold, and unexpected question doth many times surprise a man, and lay him open. Like to him that , having changed his name, and walking in Paul's, another suddenly came behind him, and called him by his true name, whereat straightways he looked back.

But these small wares, and petty points, of cunning, are infinite; and it were a good deed to make a list of them; for that nothing doth more hurt in a state, than that cunning men pass for wise.

But certainly some there are that know the resorts and falls of business, that cannot sink into the main of it; like a house that hath convenient stairs and entries, but never a fair room. Therefore, you shall see them find out pretty looses in the conclusion, but are no ways able to examine or debate matters. And yet commonly they take advantage of their inability, and would be thought wits of direction. Some build rather upon the abusing of others, and (as we now say) *putting tricks upon them*, than upon soundness of their own proceedings. But Solomon saith, *Prudens advertit ad gressus suos; stultus divertit ad dolos*.

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1692. Jonathan **SWIFT**. (1667-1745)

A Modest Proposal. *For Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland, from Being a Burden on Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Publick*. written 1729.

It is a melancholy object to those, who walk through this great town, or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads and cabbin-doors crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags, and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in strolling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants who, as they grow up, either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country, to fight for the Pretender in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes.

I think it is agreed by all parties, that this prodigious number of children in the arms, or on the backs, or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the kingdom, a very great additional grievance; and therefore whoever could find out a fair, cheap and easy method of making these children sound and useful members of the common-wealth, would deserve so well of the publick, as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation.

But my intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the children of professed beggars: it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of infants at a certain age, who are born of parents in effect as little able to support them, as those who demand our charity in the streets.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years, upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of our projectors, I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is true, a child just

dropt from its dam, may be supported by her milk, for a solar year, with little other nourishment: at most not above the value of two shillings, which the mother may certainly get, or the value in scraps, by her lawful occupation of begging; and it is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them in such a manner, as, instead of being a charge upon their parents, or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall, on the contrary, contribute to the feeding, and partly to the cloathing of many thousands.

There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary abortions, and that horrid practice of women murdering their bastard children, alas! too frequent among us, sacrificing the poor innocent babes, I doubt, more to avoid the expence than the shame, which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.

The number of souls in this kingdom being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand couple whose wives are breeders; from which number I subtract thirty thousand couple, who are able to maintain their own children, (although I apprehend there cannot be so many, under the present distresses of the kingdom) but this being granted, there will remain an hundred and seventy thousand breeders. I again subtract fifty thousand, for those women who miscarry, or whose children die by accident or disease within the year. There only remain an hundred and twenty thousand children of poor parents annually born. The question therefore is, How this number shall be reared, and provided for? which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed. For we can neither employ them in handicraft or agriculture; we neither build houses, (I mean in the country) nor cultivate land: they can very seldom pick up a livelihood by stealing till they arrive at six years old; except where they are of towardly parts, although I confess they learn the rudiments much earlier; during which time they can however be properly looked upon only as probationers: As I have been informed by a principal gentleman in the county of Cavan, who protested to me, that he never

knew above one or two instances under the age of six, even in a part of the kingdom so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that art.

I am assured by our merchants, that a boy or a girl before twelve years old, is no saleable commodity, and even when they come to this age, they will not yield above three pounds, or three pounds and half a crown at most, on the exchange; which cannot turn to account either to the parents or kingdom, the charge of nutriments and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious nourishing and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricasie, or a ragoust.

I do therefore humbly offer it to publick consideration, that of the hundred and twenty thousand children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one fourth part to be males; which is more than we allow to sheep, black cattle, or swine, and my reason is, that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages, therefore, one male will be sufficient to serve four females. That the remaining hundred thousand may, at a year old, be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune, through the kingdom, always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump, and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends, and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt, will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

I have reckoned upon a medium, that a child just born will weigh 12 pounds, and in a solar year, if tolerably nursed, encreaseth to 28 pounds.

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I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.

Infant's flesh will be in season throughout the year, but more plentiful in March, and a little before and after; for we are told by a grave author, an eminent French physician, that fish being a prolifick dyet, there are more children born in Roman Catholick countries about nine months after Lent, the markets will be more glutted than usual, because the number of Popish infants, is at least three to one in this kingdom, and therefore it will have one other collateral advantage, by lessening the number of Papists among us.

I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar's child (in which list I reckon all cottagers, labourers, and four-fifths of the farmers) to be about two shillings per annum, rags included; and I believe no gentleman would repine to give ten shillings for the carcass of a good fat child, which, as I have said, will make four dishes of excellent nutritive meat, when he hath only some particular friend, or his own family to dine with him. Thus the squire will learn to be a good landlord, and grow popular among his tenants, the mother will have eight shillings neat profit, and be fit for work till she produces another child.

Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the times require) may flea the carcass; the skin of which, artificially dressed, will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer boots for fine gentlemen.

As to our City of Dublin, shambles may be appointed for this purpose, in the most convenient parts of it, and butchers we may be assured will not be wanting; although I rather recommend buying the children alive, and dressing them hot from the knife, as we do roasting pigs.

A very worthy person, a true lover of his country, and whose virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased, in discoursing on this matter, to offer a refinement upon my scheme. He said, that many gentlemen of this kingdom, having of late destroyed their deer, he conceived that the want of venison might be well supply'd by the

bodies of young lads and maidens, not exceeding fourteen years of age, nor under twelve; so great a number of both sexes in every country being now ready to starve for want of work and service: And these to be disposed of by their parents if alive, or otherwise by their nearest relations. But with due deference to so excellent a friend, and so deserving a patriot, I cannot be altogether in his sentiments; for as to the males, my American acquaintance assured me from frequent experience, that their flesh was generally tough and lean, like that of our school-boys, by continual exercise, and their taste disagreeable, and to fatten them would not answer the charge. Then as to the females, it would, I think, with humble submission, be a loss to the publick, because they soon would become breeders themselves: And besides, it is not improbable that some scrupulous people might be apt to censure such a practice, (although indeed very unjustly) as a little bordering upon cruelty, which, I confess, hath always been with me the strongest objection against any project, how well soever intended.

But in order to justify my friend, he confessed, that this expedient was put into his head by the famous Salmanaazor, a native of the island Formosa, who came from thence to London, above twenty years ago, and in conversation told my friend, that in his country, when any young person happened to be put to death, the executioner sold the carcass to persons of quality, as a prime dainty; and that, in his time, the body of a plump girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to poison the Emperor, was sold to his imperial majesty's prime minister of state, and other great mandarins of the court in joints from the gibbet, at four hundred crowns. Neither indeed can I deny, that if the same use were made of several plump young girls in this town, who without one single groat to their fortunes, cannot stir abroad without a chair, and appear at a play-house and assemblies in foreign fineries which they never will pay for; the kingdom would not be the worse.

Some persons of a desponding spirit are in great concern about that vast number of poor people, who are aged, diseased, or maimed; and I have been desired to employ my thoughts what course may be taken, to ease the nation of so grievous

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an incumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter, because it is very well known, that they are every day dying, and rotting, by cold and famine, and filth, and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the young labourers, they are now in almost as hopeful a condition. They cannot get work, and consequently pine away from want of nourishment, to a degree, that if at any time they are accidentally hired to common labour, they have not strength to perform it, and thus the country and themselves are happily delivered from the evils to come.

I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my subject. I think the advantages by the proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the number of Papists, with whom we are yearly over-run, being the principal breeders of the nation, as well as our most dangerous enemies, and who stay at home on purpose with a design to deliver the kingdom to the Pretender, hoping to take their advantage by the absence of so many good Protestants, who have chosen rather to leave their country, than stay at home and pay tithes against their conscience to an episcopal curate.

Secondly, The poorer tenants will have something valuable of their own, which by law may be made liable to a distress, and help to pay their landlord's rent, their corn and cattle being already seized, and money a thing unknown.

Thirdly, Whereas the maintainance of an hundred thousand children, from two years old, and upwards, cannot be computed at less than ten shillings a piece per annum, the nation's stock will be thereby encreased fifty thousand pounds per annum, besides the profit of a new dish, introduced to the tables of all gentlemen of fortune in the kingdom, who have any refinement in taste. And the money will circulate among our selves, the goods being entirely of our own growth and manufacture.

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Fourthly, The constant breeders, besides the gain of eight shillings sterling per annum by the sale of their children, will be rid of the charge of maintaining them after the first year.

Fifthly, This food would likewise bring great custom to taverns, where the vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best receipts for dressing it to perfection; and consequently have their houses frequented by all the fine gentlemen, who justly value themselves upon their knowledge in good eating; and a skilful cook, who understands how to oblige his guests, will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

Sixthly, This would be a great inducement to marriage, which all wise nations have either encouraged by rewards, or enforced by laws and penalties. It would encrease the care and tenderness of mothers towards their children, when they were sure of a settlement for life to the poor babes, provided in some sort by the publick, to their annual profit instead of expence. We should soon see an honest emulation among the married women, which of them could bring the fattest child to the market. Men would become as fond of their wives, during the time of their pregnancy, as they are now of their mares in foal, their cows in calf, or sow when they are ready to farrow; nor offer to beat or kick them (as is too frequent a practice) for fear of a miscarriage.

Many other advantages might be enumerated. For instance, the addition of some thousand carcasses in our exportation of barrel'd beef: the propagation of swine's flesh, and improvement in the art of making good bacon, so much wanted among us by the great destruction of pigs, too frequent at our tables; which are no way comparable in taste or magnificence to a well grown, fat yearly child, which roasted whole will make a considerable figure at a Lord Mayor's feast, or any other publick entertainment. But this, and many others, I omit, being studious of brevity.

Supposing that one thousand families in this city, would be constant customers for infants flesh, besides others who might have it at merry meetings, particularly at weddings and christenings, I compute that Dublin would take off

annually about twenty thousand carcasses; and the rest of the kingdom (where probably they will be sold somewhat cheaper) the remaining eighty thousand.

I can think of no one objection, that will possibly be raised against this proposal, unless it should be urged, that the number of people will be thereby much lessened in the kingdom. This I freely own, and 'twas indeed one principal design in offering it to the world. I desire the reader will observe, that I calculate my remedy for this one individual Kingdom of Ireland, and for no other that ever was, is, or, I think, ever can be upon Earth. Therefore let no man talk to me of other expedients: Of taxing our absentees at five shillings a pound: Of using neither cloaths, nor houshold furniture, except what is of our own growth and manufacture: Of utterly rejecting the materials and instruments that promote foreign luxury: Of curing the expensiveness of pride, vanity, idleness, and gaming in our women: Of introducing a vein of parsimony, prudence and temperance: Of learning to love our country, wherein we differ even from Laplanders, and the inhabitants of Topinamboo: Of quitting our animosities and factions, nor acting any longer like the Jews, who were murdering one another at the very moment their city was taken: Of being a little cautious not to sell our country and consciences for nothing: Of teaching landlords to have at least one degree of mercy towards their tenants. Lastly, of putting a spirit of honesty, industry, and skill into our shop-keepers, who, if a resolution could now be taken to buy only our native goods, would immediately unite to cheat and exact upon us in the price, the measure, and the goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair proposal of just dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.

Therefore I repeat, let no man talk to me of these and the like expedients, 'till he hath at least some glympse of hope, that there will ever be some hearty and sincere attempt to put them into practice.

But, as to my self, having been wearied out for many years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of success, I fortunately fell upon this proposal, which, as it is wholly new, so it hath something solid and real, of no expence and little trouble, full in our own power, and whereby we can incur no

danger in disobliging England. For this kind of commodity will not bear exportation, and flesh being of too tender a consistence, to admit a long continuance in salt, although perhaps I could name a country, which would be glad to eat up our whole nation without it.

After all, I am not so violently bent upon my own opinion, as to reject any offer, proposed by wise men, which shall be found equally innocent, cheap, easy, and effectual. But before something of that kind shall be advanced in contradiction to my scheme, and offering a better, I desire the author or authors will be pleased maturely to consider two points. First, As things now stand, how they will be able to find food and raiment for a hundred thousand useless mouths and backs. And secondly, There being a round million of creatures in humane figure throughout this kingdom, whose whole subsistence put into a common stock, would leave them in debt two million of pounds sterling, adding those who are beggars by profession, to the bulk of farmers, cottagers and labourers, with their wives and children, who are beggars in effect; I desire those politicians who dislike my overture, and may perhaps be so bold to attempt an answer, that they will first ask the parents of these mortals, whether they would not at this day think it a great happiness to have been sold for food at a year old, in the manner I prescribe, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual scene of misfortunes, as they have since gone through, by the oppression of landlords, the impossibility of paying rent without money or trade, the want of common sustenance, with neither house nor cloaths to cover them from the inclemencies of the weather, and the most inevitable prospect of intailing the like, or greater miseries, upon their breed for ever.

I profess, in the sincerity of my heart, that I have not the least personal interest in endeavouring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the publick good of my country, by advancing our trade, providing for infants, relieving the poor, and giving some pleasure to the rich. I have no children, by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old, and my wife past child-bearing.

1697. Joseph **ADDISON**. (1672-1719)

Reflections in Westminster Abbey. written 1711.

Pallida mors aequo palsat pede pauperam tabernas
Regumque tures, O beati Sexti,
Vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam:
Jam te premet nox, fabulaeque manes,
Et domus exilis Plutonia – Hor. i.4.13

[Pale Death with foot impartial tramples down
The man's cot, the kingly tower and throne.
Thrice-happy Sestius ! Life's brief span denies
Far-reaching hopes and flattering auguries.
Long night awaits us all. The ghostly crew
And Pluto's gloomy mansions loom in view – Stephen De Vere.]

When I am in a serious humour, I very often walk by myself in Westminster Abbey, where the gloominess of the place, and the use to which it is applied, with the solemnity of the building, and the condition of the people who lie in it, are apt to fill the mind with a kind of melancholy, or rather thoughtfulness, that is not disagreeable. I yesterday passed a whole afternoon in the churchyard, the cloisters, and the church, amusing myself with the tombstones and inscriptions that I met with in those several regions of the dead. Most of them recorded nothing else of the buried person, but that he was born upon one day, and died upon another: the whole history of his life being comprehended in those two circumstances, that are common to all mankind. I could not but look upon these registers of existence, whether of brass or marble, as a kind of satire upon the departed persons; who had left no other memorial of them, but that they were born and that they died. They put me in mind of several persons mentioned in the battles of heroic poems, who have

sounding names given them, for no other reason but that they may be killed, and are celebrated for nothing but being knocked on the head.

Glaukon te, Medonta te, Thersilochon te. HOM. IL. P.216.
*Glaucumque, Medontaque, Thersilochumque.*VIRG. Aen. vi. 483.

The life of these men is finely described in Holy Writ by "the path of an arrow," which is immediately closed up and lost.

Upon my going into the church, I entertained myself with the digging of a grave; and saw in every shovelful of it that was thrown up, the fragment of a bone or skull intermixt with a kind of fresh mouldering earth, that some time or other had a place in the composition of a human body. Upon this, I began to consider with myself what innumerable multitudes of people lay confused together under the pavement of that ancient cathedral; how men and women, friends and enemies, priests and soldiers, monks and prebendaries, were crumbled amongst one another, and blended together in the same common mass; how beauty, strength, and youth, with old age, weakness and deformity, lay undistinguished in the same promiscuous heap of matter.

After having thus surveyed this great magazine of mortality, as it were, in the lump; I examined it more particularly by the accounts which I found on several of the monuments which are raised in every quarter of that ancient fabric. Some of them were covered with such extravagant epitaphs, that, if it were possible for the dead person to be acquainted with them, he would blush at the praises which his friends have bestowed upon him. There are others so excessively modest, that they deliver the character of the person departed in Greek or Hebrew, and by that means are not understood once in a twelve month. In the poetical quarter, I found there were poets who had no monuments, and monuments which had no poets. I observed indeed that the present war had filled the church with many of these uninhabited monuments, which had been erected to the memory of persons whose

bodies were perhaps buried in the plains of Blenheim, or in the bosom of the ocean.

I could not but be very much delighted with several modern epitaphs, which are written with great elegance of expression and justness of thought, and therefore do honour to the living as well as to the dead. As a foreigner is very apt to conceive an idea of the ignorance or politeness of a nation, from the turn of their public monuments and inscriptions, they should be submitted to the perusal of men of learning and genius, before they are put in execution. Sir Cloudesly Shovel's monument has very often given me great offence: instead of the brave rough English Admiral, which was the distinguishing character of that plain gallant man, he is represented on his tomb by the figure of a beau, dressed in a long periwig, and reposing himself upon velvet cushions under a canopy of state. The inscription is answerable to the monument; for instead of celebrating the many remarkable actions he had performed in the service of his country, it acquaints us only with the manner of his death, in which it was impossible for him to reap any honour. The Dutch, whom we are apt to despise for want of genius, show an infinitely greater taste of antiquity and politeness in their buildings and works of this nature, than what we meet with in those of our own country. The monuments of their admirals, which have been erected at the public expense, represent them like themselves; and are adorned with rostral crowns and naval ornaments, with beautiful festoons of seaweed, shells, and coral.

But to return to our subject. I have left the repository of our English kings for the contemplation of another day, when I shall find my mind disposed for so serious an amusement. I know that entertainments of this nature are apt to raise dark and dismal thoughts in timorous minds, and gloomy imaginations; but for my own part, though I am always serious, I do not know what it is to be melancholy; and can therefore take a view of nature in her deep and solemn scenes, with the same pleasure as in her most gay and delightful ones. By this means I can improve myself with those objects, which others consider with terror. When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the

beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow; when I see kings lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together.

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1697. Richard **STEELE**. (1672-1729)

On Recollections of Childhood. written 1710.

There are those among mankind, who can enjoy no relish of their being, except the world is made acquainted with all that relates to them, and think every thing lost that passes unobserved; but others find a solid delight in stealing by the crowd, and modelling their life after such a manner, as is as much above the approbation as the practice of the vulgar. Life being too short to give instances great enough of true friendship or good will, some sages have thought it pious to preserve a certain reverence for the names of their deceased friends; and have withdrawn themselves from the rest of the world at certain seasons, to commemorate in their own thoughts such of their acquaintance who have gone before them out of this life. And indeed, when we are advanced in years, there is not a more pleasing entertainment, than to recollect in a gloomy moment the many we have parted with that have been dear and agreeable to us, and to cast a melancholy thought or two after those with whom, perhaps, we have indulged ourselves in whole nights of mirth and jollity. With such inclinations in my heart I went to my closet yesterday in the evening, and resolved to be sorrowful; upon which occasion I could not but look with disdain upon myself, that though all the reasons which I had to lament the loss of many of my friends are now as forcible as at the moment of their departure, yet did not my heart swell with the same sorrow which I felt at the time; but I could, without tears, reflect upon many pleasing adventures I have had with some, who have long been blended with common earth. Though it is by the benefit of nature, that length of time thus blots out the violence of afflictions; yet, with tempers too

much given to pleasure, it is almost necessary to revive the old places of grief in our memory; and ponder step by step on past life, to lead the mind into that sobriety of thought which poises the heart, and makes it beat with due time, without being quickened with desire, or retarded with despair, from its proper and equal motion. When we wind up a clock that is out of order, to make it go well for the future, we do not immediately set the hand to the present instant, but we make it strike the round of all its hours, before it can recover the regularity of its time. Such, thought I, shall be my method this evening; and since it is that day of the year which I dedicate to the memory of such in another life as I much delighted in when living, an hour or two shall be sacred to sorrow and their memory, while I run over all the melancholy circumstances of this kind which have occurred to me in my whole life.

The first sense of sorrow I ever knew was upon the death of my father, at which time I was not quite five years of age; but was rather amazed at what all the house meant, than possessed with a real understanding why nobody was willing to play with me. I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a-beating the coffin, and calling Papa; for, I know not how, I had some slight idea that he was locked up there. My mother caught me in her arms, and, transported beyond all patience of the silent grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her embraces; and told me in a flood of tears, Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under ground, whence he could never come to us again. She was a very beautiful woman, of a noble spirit, and there was a dignity in her grief amidst all the wildness of her transport, which, methought, struck me with an instinct of sorrow, that, before I was sensible of what it was to grieve, seized my very soul, and has made pity the weakness of my heart ever since. The mind in infancy is, methinks, like the body in embryo; and receives impressions so forcible, that they are as hard to be removed by reason, as any mark with which a child is born is to be taken away by any future application. Hence it is, that good-nature in me is no merit; but having been so frequently overwhelmed with her tears

before I knew the cause of any affliction, or could draw defences from my own judgement, I imbibed commiseration, remorse, and an unmanly gentleness of mind, which has since ensnared me into ten thousand calamities; from whence I can reap no advantage, except it be, that, in such a humour as I am now in, I can the better indulge myself in the softnesses of humanity, and enjoy that sweet anxiety which arises from the memory of past afflictions.

We that are very old are better able to remember things which befell us in our distant youth, than the passages of later days. For this reason it is that the companions of my strong and vigorous years present themselves more immediately to me in this office of sorrow. Untimely and unhappy deaths are what we are most apt to lament; so little are we able to make it indifferent when a thing happens, though we know it must happen. Thus we groan under life, and bewail those who are relieved from it. Every object that returns to our imagination raises different passions, according to the circumstance of their departure. Who can have lived in an army, and in a serious hour reflect upon the many gay and agreeable men that might long have flourished in the arts of peace, and not join with the imprecations of the fatherless and widows on the tyrant to whose ambition they fell sacrifices? But gallant men, who are cut off by the sword, move rather our veneration than our pity; and we gather relief enough from their own contempt of death, to make that no evil, which was approached with so much cheerfulness, and attended with so much honour. But when we turn our thoughts from the great parts of life on such occasions, and, instead of lamenting those who stood ready to give death to those from whom they had the fortune to receive it; I say, when we let our thoughts wander from such noble objects, and consider the havoc which is made among the tender and the innocent, pity enters with an unmixed softness, and possesses all our souls at once.

Here (were there words to express such sentiments with proper tenderness) I should record the beauty, innocence, and untimely death, of the first object my eyes ever beheld with love. The beauteous virgin! how ignorantly did she charm, how

carelessly excel! Oh death! thou hast right to the bold, to the ambitious, to the high, and to the haughty; but why this cruelty to the humble, to the meek, to the undiscerning, to the thoughtless? Nor age, nor business, nor distress, can erase the dear image from my imagination. In the same week I saw her dressed for a ball, and in a shroud. How ill did the habit of death become the pretty trifler! I still behold the smiling earth – A large train of disasters were coming on to my memory, when my servant knocked at my closet-door, and interrupted me with a letter, attended with a hamper of wine, of the same sort with that which is to be put to sale on Thursday next, at Garraway's coffee-house. Upon the receipt of it, I sent for three of my friends. We are so intimate, that we can be company in whatever state of mind we meet, and can entertain each other without expecting always to rejoice. The wine we found to be generous and warming, but with such a heat as moved us rather to be cheerful than frolicsome. It revived the spirits, without firing the blood. We commended it until two of the clock this morning; and having to-day met a little before dinner, we found, that though we drank two bottles a man, we had much more reason to recollect than forget what had passed the night before.

1753. Oliver **GOLDSMITH**. (1728-1774)

(extract) **National Prejudices**. written 1763.

As I am one of that sauntering tribe of mortals, who spend the greatest part of their time in taverns, coffee houses, and other places of public resort, I have thereby an opportunity of observing an infinite variety of characters, which, to a person of a contemplative turn, is a much higher entertainment than a view of all the curiosities of art or nature. In one of these, my late rambles, I accidentally fell into the company of half a dozen gentlemen, who were engaged in a warm dispute about some political affair; the decision of which, as they were equally divided in their sentiments, they thought proper to refer to me, which naturally drew me in for a share of the conversation.

Amongst a multiplicity of other topics, we took occasion to talk of a different characters of the several nations of Europe; when one of the gentlemen, cocking his hat, and assuming such an air of importance as if he had possessed all the merit of the English nation in his own person, declared that the Dutch were a parcel of avaricious wretches; the French a set of flattering sycophants; that the Germans were drunken sots, and beastly gluttons; and the Spaniards proud, haughty, and surly tyrants; but that in bravery, generosity, clemency, and in every other virtue, the English excelled all the world.

This very learned and judicious remark was received with a general smile of approbation by all the company--all, I mean, but your humble servant; who, endeavouring to keep my gravity as well as I could, I reclined my head upon my arm, continued for some times in a posture of affected thoughtfulness, as if I had been musing on something else, and did not seem to attend to the subject of

conversation; hoping by these means to avoid the disagreeable necessity of explaining myself, and thereby depriving the gentlemen of his imaginary happiness.

But my pseudo-patriot had no mind to let me escape so easily. Not satisfied that his opinion should pass without contradiction, he was determined to have it ratified by the suffrage of every one in the company; for which purpose addressing himself to me with an air of inexpressible confidence, he asked me if I was not in the same way of thinking. As I am never forward in giving my opinion, especially when I have reason to believe that it will not be agreeable; so, when I am obliged to give it, I always hold it for a maxim to speak my real sentiments. I therefore told him that, for my own part, I should not have ventured to talk in such a peremptory strain, unless I had made the tour of Europe, and examined the manners of these several nations with great care and accuracy: that, perhaps, a more impartial judge would not scruple to affirm that the Dutch were more frugal and industrious, the French more temperate and polite, the Germans more hardy and patient of labour and fatigue, and the Spaniards more staid and sedate, than the English; who, though undoubtedly brave and generous, were at the same time rash, headstrong, and impetuous; too apt to be elated with prosperity, and to despond in adversity.

I could easily perceive that all of the company began to regard me with a jealous eye before I had finished my answer, which I had no sooner done, than the patriotic gentleman observed, with a contemptuous sneer, that he was greatly surprised how some people could have the conscience to live in a country which they did not love, and to enjoy the protection of a government, to which in their hearts they were inveterate enemies. Finding that by this modest declaration of my sentiments, I had forfeited the good opinion of my companions, and given them occasion to call my political principles in question, and well knowing that it was in vain to argue with men who were so very full of themselves, I threw down my reckoning and retired to my own lodgings, reflecting on the absurd and ridiculous nature of national prejudice and prepossession.

Among all the famous sayings of antiquity, there is none that does greater honour to the author, or affords greater pleasure to the reader (at least if he be a person of a generous and benevolent heart) than that the philosopher, who, being asked what „countryman he was," replied that he was a citizen of the world. How few there are to be found in modern times who can say the same, or whose conduct is consistent with such a profession! We are now become so much Englishmen, Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Spaniards, or Germans, that we are no longer citizens of the world; so much the natives of one particular spot, or members of one petty society, that we no longer consider ourselves as the general inhabitants of the globe, or members of that grand society which comprehends the whole human kind.

Did these prejudices prevail only among the meanest and lowest of the people, perhaps they might be excused, as they have few, if any, opportunities of correcting them by reading, travelling, or conversing with foreigners; but the misfortune is, that they infect the minds, and influence the conduct even of our gentlemen; of those, I mean, who have every title to this appellation but an exemption from prejudice, which, however, in my opinion, ought to be regarded as the characteristical mark of a gentleman: for let a man's birth be ever so high, his station ever so exalted, or his fortune ever so large, yet if he is not free from national and other prejudices, I should make bold to tell him, that he had a low and vulgar mind, and had no just claim to the character of a gentleman. And in fact, you will always find that those are most apt to boast of national merit, who have little or no merit of their own to depend on, than which, to be sure, nothing is more natural: the slender vine twists around the sturdy oak for no other reason in the world but because it has not strength sufficient to support itself.

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Should it be alleged in defence of national prejudice, that it is the natural and necessary growth of love to our country, and that therefore the former cannot be destroyed without hurting the latter; I answer, that this is a gross fallacy and delusion. That it is the growth and love to our country, I will allow; but that it is the natural and necessary growth of it, I absolutely deny. Superstition and enthusiasm too are the growth of religion; but who ever took it in his head to affirm that they are the necessary growth of this noble principle? They are, if you will, the bastard sprouts of this heavenly plant; but not its natural and genuine branches, and may safely enough be lopped off, without doing any harm to the parent stock; nay, perhaps, till once they are lopped off, this goodly tree can never flourish in perfect health and vigour.

Is it not very possible that I may love my own country, without hating the natives of other countries? that I may exert the most heroic bravery, the most undaunted resolution, in defending its laws and liberty, without despising all the rest of the world as cowards and poltroons? Most certainly it is: and if it were not – But why need I suppose what is absolutely impossible?—but if it were not, I must own, I should prefer the title of the ancient philosopher, namely, a citizen of the world, to that of an Englishman, a Frenchman, a European, or to any other appellation whatever.

1797. Samuel Taylor **COLERIDGE**. (1772-1834)

Lectures and Notes on Shakspeare *and Other English Poets.*

written 1818.

Hamlet.

["Hamlet" was the play, or rather Hamlet himself was the character, in the intuition and exposition of which I first made my turn for philosophical criticism, and especially for insight into the genius of Shakspere, noticed. This happened first amongst my acquaintances, as Sir George Beaumont will bear witness; and subsequently, long before Schlegel had delivered at Vienna the lectures on Shakspere, which he afterwards published, I had given on the same subject eighteen lectures substantially the same, proceeding from the very same point of view, and deducing the same conclusions, so far as I either then agreed, or now agree, with him. I gave these lectures at the Royal Institution before six or seven hundred auditors of rank and eminence, in the spring of the same year, in which Sir Humphry Davy, a fellow–lecturer, made his great revolutionary discoveries in chemistry. Even in detail the coincidence of Schlegel with my lectures was so extraordinary, that all who at a later period heard the same words, taken by me from my notes of the lectures at the Royal Institution, concluded a borrowing on my part form Schlegel. Mr. Hazlitt, whose hatred of me is in such an inverse ratio to my zealous kindness towards him, as to be defended by his warmest admirer, Charles Lamb – (who, God bless him! besides his characteristic obstinacy of adherence to old friends, as long at least as they are at all down in the world, is linked as by a charm to Hazlitt's conversation) – only as "frantic;" – Mr. Hazlitt, I say, himself replied to an assertion of my plagiarism from Schlegel in these words; – "That is a lie; for I

myself heard the very same character of Hamlet from Coleridge before he went to Germany, and when he had neither read nor could read a page of German!" Now Hazlitt was on a visit to me at my cottage at Nether Stowey, Somerset, in the summer of the year 1798, in the September of which year I first was out of sight of the shores of Great Britain. Recorded by me, S.T. Coleridge, 7th January, 1819.]

The seeming inconsistencies in the conduct and character of Hamlet have long exercised the conjectural ingenuity of critics; and, as we are always loth to suppose that the cause of defective apprehension is in ourselves, the mystery has been too commonly explained by the very easy process of setting it down as in fact inexplicable, and by resolving the phenomenon into a misgrowth or *lusus* of the capricious and irregular genius of Shakspere. The shallow and stupid arrogance of these vulgar and indolent decisions I would fain do my best to expose. I believe the character of Hamlet may be traced to Shakspere's deep and accurate science in mental philosophy. Indeed, that this character must have some connection with the common fundamental laws of our nature may be assumed from the fact, that Hamlet has been the darling of every country in which the literature of England has been fostered. In order to understand him, it is essential that we should reflect on the constitution of our own minds. Man is distinguished from the brute animals in proportion as thought prevails over sense : but in the healthy processes of the mind, a balance is constantly maintained between the impressions from outward objects and the inward operations of the intellect; – for if there be an overbalance in the contemplative faculty, man thereby becomes the creature of mere meditation, and loses his natural power of action. Now one of Shakspere's modes of creating characters is, to conceive any one intellectual or moral faculty in morbid excess, and then to place himself, Shakspere, thus mutilated or diseased, under given circumstances. In Hamlet he seems to have wished to exemplify the moral necessity of a due balance between our attention to the objects of our senses, and our meditation on the workings of our minds, – an *equilibrium* between the real and the

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imaginary worlds. In Hamlet this balance is disturbed : his thoughts, and the images of his fancy, are far more vivid than his actual perceptions, and his very perceptions, instantly passing through the *medium* of his contemplations, acquire, as they pass, a form and a colour not naturally their own. Hence we see a great, an almost enormous, intellectual activity, and a proportionate aversion to real action consequent upon it, with all its symptoms and accompanying qualities. This character Shakspere places in circumstances, under which it is obliged to act on the spur of the moment :– Hamlet is brave and careless of death; but he vacillates from sensibility, and procrastinates from thought, and loses the power of action in the energy of resolve. Thus it is that this tragedy presents a direct contrast to that of "Macbeth;" the one proceeds with the utmost slowness, the other with a crowded and breathless rapidity.

The effect of this overbalance of the imaginative power is beautifully illustrated in the everlasting broodings and superfluous activities of Hamlet's mind, which, unseated from its healthy relation, is constantly occupied with the world within, and abstracted from the world without, – giving substance to shadows, and throwing a mist over all common-place actualities. It is the nature of thought to be indefinite; – definiteness belongs to external imagery alone. Hence it is that the sense of sublimity arises, not from the sight of an outward object, but from the beholder's reflection upon it; – not from the sensuous impression, but from the imaginative reflex. Few have seen a celebrated waterfall without feeling something akin to disappointment : it is only subsequently that the image comes back full into the mind, and brings with it a train of grand or beautiful associations. Hamlet feels this; his senses are in a state of trance, and he looks upon external things as hieroglyphics. His soliloquy –

"O! that this too too solid flesh would melt," &c.

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springs from that craving after the indefinite – for that which is not – which most easily besets men of genius; and the self–delusion common to this temper of mind is finely exemplified in the character which Hamlet gives of himself :–

> "It cannot be
> But I am chicken liver'd, and lack gall
> To make oppression bitter."

He mistakes the seeing his chains for the breaking them, delays action till action is of no use, and dies the victim of mere circumstance and accident.

There is a great significancy in the names of Shakspere's plays. In the "Twelfth Night," "Midsummer Night's Dream," "As You Like It," and "Winter's Tale," the total effect is produced by a co–ordination of the characters as in a wreath of flowers. But in "Coriolanus," "Lear," "Romeo and Juliet," "Hamlet," "Othello," &c., the effect arises from the subordination of all to one, either as the prominent person, or the principal object. "Cymbeline" is the only exception; and even that has its advantages in preparing the audience for the chaos of time, place, and costume, by throwing the date back into a fabulous king's reign.

But as of more importance, so more striking, is the judgment displayed by our truly dramatic poet, as well as the poet of the drama, in the management of his first scenes. With the single exception of "Cymbeline," they either place before us at one glance both the past and the future in some effect, which implies the continuance and full agency of its cause, as in the feuds and party–spirit of the servants of the two houses in the first scene of "Romeo and Juliet;" or in the degrading passion for shows and public spectacles, and the overwhelming attachment for the newest successful war–chief in the Roman people, already become a populace, contrasted with the jealousy of the nobles in "Julius Cæsar;" – or they at once commence the action so as to excite a curiosity for the explanation in the following scenes, as in the storm of wind and waves, and the boatswain in the "Tempest," instead of

anticipating our curiosity, as in most other first scenes, and in too many other first acts; – or they act, by contrast of diction suited to the characters, at once to heighten the effect, and yet to give a naturalness to the language and rhythm of the principal personages, either as that of Prospero and Miranda by the appropriate lowness of the style, – or as in "King John," by the equally appropriate stateliness of official harangues or narratives, so that the after blank verse seems to belong to the rank and quality of the speakers, and not to the poet; – or they strike at once the key–note, and give the predominant spirit of the play, as in the "Twelfth Night," and in "Macbeth;" – or finally, the first scene comprises all these advantages at once, as in "Hamlet."

Compare the easy language of common life, in which this drama commences, with the direful music and wild wayward rhythm and abrupt lyrics of the opening of "Macbeth." The tone is quite familiar; – there is no poetic description of night, no elaborate information conveyed by one speaker to another of what both had immediately before their senses – (such as the first distich in Addison's "Cato," which is a translation into poetry of "Past four o'clock and a dark morning!"); – and yet nothing bordering on the comic on the one hand, nor any striving of the intellect on the other. It is precisely the language of sensation among men who feared no charge of effeminacy, for feeling what they had no want of resolution to bear. Yet the armour, the dead silence, the watchfulness that first interrupts it, the welcome relief of the guard, the cold, the broken expressions of compelled attention to bodily feelings still under control – all excellently accord with, and prepare for, the after gradual rise into tragedy; – but, above all, into a tragedy, the interest of which is as eminently *ad et apud intra*, as that of "Macbeth" is directly *ad extra*.

In all the best attested stories of ghosts and visions, as in that of Brutus, of Archbishop Cranmer, that of Benvenuto Cellini recorded by himself, and the vision of Galileo communicated by him to his favourite pupil Torricelli, the ghost–seers were in a state of cold or chilling damp from without, and of anxiety inwardly. It has been with all of them as with Francisco on his guard, – alone, in the depth and silence of the night; – "'twas bitter cold, and they were sick at heart, and *not a mouse*

stirring." The attention to minute sounds, – naturally associated with the recollection of minute objects, and the more familiar and trifling, the more impressive from the unusualness of their producing any impression at all – gives a philosophic pertinency to this last image; but it has likewise its dramatic use and purpose. For its commonness in ordinary conversation tends to produce the sense of reality, and at once hides the poet, and yet approximates the reader or spectator to that state in which the highest poetry will appear, and in its component parts, though not in the whole composition, really is, the language of nature. If I should not speak it, I feel that I should be thinking it; – the voice only is the poet's, – the words are my own. That Shakspere meant to put an effect in the actor's power in the very first words – "Who's there?" – is evident from the impatience expressed by the startled Francisco in the words that follow – "Nay, answer me : stand and unfold yourself." A brave man is never so peremptory, as when he fears that he is afraid. Observe the gradual transition from the silence and the still recent habit of listening in Francisco's – "I think I hear them" – to the more cheerful call out, which a good actor would observe, in the – "Stand ho! Who is there?" Bernardo's inquiry after Horatio, and the repetition of his name and in his own presence, indicate a respect or an eagerness that implies him as one of the persons who are in the foreground; and the scepticism attributed to him, –

"Horatio says, 'tis but our fantasy;
And will not let belief take hold of him –"

prepares us for Hamlet's after eulogy on him as one whose blood and judgment were happily commingled. The actor should also be careful to distinguish the expectation and gladness of Bernardo's "Welcome, Horatio!" form the mere courtesy of his "Welcome, good Marcellus!"

Now observe the admirable indefiniteness of the first opening out of the occasion of all this anxiety. The preparation informative of the audience is just as

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much as was precisely necessary, and no more; – it begins with the uncertainty appertaining to a question : –

“*Mar.* What, has *this thing* appear’d again to–night? –”

Even the word “again” has its *credibilizing* effect. Then Horatio, the representative of the ignorance of the audience, not himself, but by Marcellus to Bernardo, anticipates the common solution – “‘tis but our fantasy!” upon which Marcellus rises into

“This dreaded sight, twice seen of us –”

which immediately afterwards becomes “this apparition,” and that, too, an intelligent spirit, that is, to be spoken to! Then comes the confirmation of Horatio’s disbelief; –

“Tush! tush! ‘twill not appear! –”

and the silence, with which the scene opened, is again restored in the shivering feeling of Horatio sitting down, at such a time, and with the two eye–witnesses, to hear a story of a ghost, and that, too, of a ghost which had appeared twice before at the very same hour. In the deep feeling which Bernardo has of the solemn nature of what he is about to relate, he makes an effort to master his own imaginative terrors by an elevation of style, – itself a continuation of the effort, – and by turning off from the apparition, as from something which would force him too deeply into himself, to the outward objects, the realities of nature, which had accompanied it : –

“*Ber.* Last night of all,
When yon same star, that’s westward from the pole,

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Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one –"

This passage seems to contradict the critical law that what is told, makes a faint impression compared with what is beholden; for it does indeed convey to the mind more than the eye can see; whilst the interruption of the narrative at the very moment, when we are most intensely listening for the sequel, and have our thoughts diverted from the dreaded sight in expectation of the desired, yet almost dreaded, tale – this gives all the suddenness and surprise of the original appearance; –

"*Mar.* Peace, break thee off; look where it comes again! –"

Note the judgment displayed in having the two persons present, who, as having seen the Ghost before, are naturally eager in confirming their former opinions, – whilst the sceptic is silent, and after having been twice addressed by his friends, answers with two hasty syllables – "Most like," – and a confession of horror:

"– It harrows me with fear and wonder."

O heaven! words are wasted on those who feel, and to those who do not feel the exquisite judgment of Shakspere in this scene, what can be said? – Hume himself could not but have had faith in this Ghost dramatically, let his anti–ghostism have been as strong as Samson against other ghosts less powerfully raised.

Act i. sc. 1.
"*Mar.* Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch," &c.

How delightfully natural is the transition to the retrospective narrative! And observe, upon the Ghost's reappearance, how much Horatio's courage is increased by having translated the late individual spectator into general thought and past experience, – and the sympathy of Marcellus and Bernardo with his patriotic surmises in daring to strike at the Ghost; whilst in a moment, upon its vanishing, the former solemn awe–stricken feeling returns upon them :–

"We do it wrong, being so majestical,
To offer it the show of violence. –"

Ib. Horatio's speech :–

"I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill–sounding throat
Awake the god of day," &c.

No Addison could be more careful to be poetical in diction than Shakspere in providing the grounds and sources of its propriety. But how to elevate a thing almost mean by its familiarity, young poets may learn in this treatment of the cock–crow.

Ib. Horatio's speech : –

"And, by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to–night
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,
The spirit , dumb to us, will speak to him."

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Note the inobtrusive and yet fully adequate mode of introducing the main character, "young Hamlet," upon whom is transferred all the interest excited for the acts and concerns of the king his father.

Ib. sc. 2. The audience are now relieved by a change of scene to the royal court, in order that "Hamlet" may not have to take up the leavings of exhaustion. In the king's speech, observe the set and pedantically antithetic form of the sentences when touching that which galled the heels of conscience, – the strain of undignified rhetoric, – and yet in what follows concerning the public weal, a certain appropriate majesty. Indeed was he not a royal brother? –

Ib. King's speech :–

"And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?" &c.

Thus with great art Shakspere introduces a most important, but still subordinate character first, Laertes, who is yet thus graciously treated in consequence of the assistance given to the election of the late king's brother instead of his son by Polonius.

Ib.

"*Ham.* A little more than kin, and less than kind.
King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?
Ham. Not so, my lord, I am too much i' the sun."

Hamlet opens his mouth with a playing on words, the complete absence of which throughout characterizes "Macbeth." This playing on words may be attributed to many causes or motives, as either an exuberant activity of mind, as in the higher comedy of Shakspere generally; – or to an imitation of it as a mere fashion, as if it were said – "Is not this better than groaning?" – or to a contemptuous exultation in minds vulgarized and overset by their success, as in the poetic instance

of Milton's Devils in the battle; – or it is the language of resentment, as is familiar to every one who has witnessed the quarrels of the lower orders, where there is invariably a profusion of punning invective, whence, perhaps, nicknames have in a considerable degree sprung up; – or it is the language of suppressed passion, and especially of a hardly smothered personal dislike. The first, and last of these combine in Hamlet's case; and I have little doubt that Farmer is right in supposing the equivocation carried on in the expression "too much i' the sun," or son.

Ib.

"*Ham.* Ay, madam, it is common."

Here observe Hamlet's delicacy to his mother, and how the suppression prepares him for the overflow in the next speech, in which his character is more developed by bringing forward his aversion to externals, and which betrays his habit of brooding over the world within him, coupled with a prodigality of beautiful words, which are the half embodyings of thought, and are more than thought, and have an outness, a reality *sui generis,* and yet retain their correspondence and shadowy affinity to the images and movements within. Note also Hamlet's silence to the long speech of the king which follows, and his respectful, but general, answer to his mother.

Ib. Hamlet's first soliloquy :–

"O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!" &c.

This *tædium vitæ* is a common oppression on minds cast in the Hamlet mould, and is caused by disproportionate mental exertion, which necessitates exhaustion of bodily feeling. Where there is a just coincidence of external and internal action, pleasure is always the result; but where the former is deficient, and the mind's

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appetency of the ideal is unchecked, realities will seem cold and unmoving. In such cases, passion combines itself with the indefinite alone. In this mood of his mind the relation of the appearance of his father's spirit in arms is made all at once to Hamlet : – it is – Horatio's speech, in particular – a perfect model of the true style of dramatic narrative; – the purest poetry, and yet in the most natural language, equally remote from the ink–horn and the plough.

Ib. sc. 3. This scene must be regarded as one of Shakspere's lyric movements in the play, and the skill with which it is interwoven with the dramatic parts is peculiarly an excellence of our poet. You experience the sensation of a pause without the sense of a stop. You will observe in Ophelia's short and general answer to the long speech of Laertes the natural carelessness of innocence, which cannot think such a code of cautions and prudences necessary to its own preservation.

Ib. Speech of Polonius :– (in Stockdale's edition.)
"Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,)
Wronging it thus, you'll tender me a fool."

I suspect this "wronging" is here used much in the same sense as "wringing" or "wrenching;" and that the parenthesis should be extended to "thus".

Ib. Speech of Polonius:–
"– How prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows :– these blazes, daughter," &c.

A spondee has, I doubt not, dropped out of the text. Either insert "Go to" after "vows;" –

"Lends the tongue vows:– Go to, these blazes, daughter –"

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or read

"Lends the tongue vows:– These blazes, daughter, mark you –"

Shakspere never introduces a catalectic line without intending an equivalent to the foot omitted in the pauses, or the dwelling emphasis, or the diffused retardation. I do not, however, deny that a good actor might, by employing the last mentioned means, namely, the retardation, or solemn knowing drawl, supply the missing spondee with good effect. But I do not believe that in this or any other of the foregoing speeches of Polonius, Shakspere meant to bring out the senility or weakness of that personage's mind. In the great ever–recurring dangers and duties of life, where to distinguish the fit objects for the application of the maxims collected by the experience of a long life, requires no fineness of tact, as in the admonitions to his son and daughter, Polonius is uniformly made respectable. But if an actor were even capable of catching these shades in the character, the pit and the gallery would be malcontent at their exhibition. It is to Hamlet that Polonius is, and is meant to be, contemptible, because in inwardness and uncontrollable activity of movement, Hamlet's mind is the logical contrary to that of Polonius, and besides, as I have observed before, Hamlet dislikes the man, as false to his true allegiance in the matter of the succession to the crown.

Ib. sc. 4. The unimportant conversation with which this scene opens is a proof of Shakspere's minute knowledge of human nature. It is a well established fact, that on the brink of any serious enterprise, or event of moment, men almost invariably endeavour to elude the pressure of their own thoughts by turning aside to trivial objects and familiar circumstances: thus this dialogue on the platform begins with remarks on the coldness of the air, and inquiries, obliquely connected, indeed, with the expected hour of the visitation, but thrown out in a seeming vacuity of topics, as to the striking of the clock and so forth. The same desire to escape from the impending thought is carried on in Hamlet's account of, and moralizing on, the

Danish custom of wassailing: he runs off from the particular to the universal, and, in his repugnance to personal and individual concerns, escapes, as it were, from himself in generalizations, and smothers the impatience and uneasy feelings of the moment in abstract reasoning. Besides this, another purpose is answered; – for by thus entangling the attention of the audience in the nice distinctions and parenthetical sentences of this speech of Hamlet's, Shakspere takes them completely by surprise on the appearance of the Ghost, which comes upon them in all the suddenness of its visionary character. Indeed, no modern writer would have dared, like Shakspere, to have preceded this last visitation by two distinct appearances, – or could have contrived that the third should rise upon the former two in impressiveness and solemnity of interest.

But in addition to all the other excellencies of Hamlet's speech concerning the wassail–music – so finely revealing the predominant idealism, the ratiocinative meditativeness, of his character – it has the advantage of giving nature and probability to the impassioned continuity of the speech instantly directed to the Ghost. The *momentum* had been given to his mental activity; the full current of the thoughts and words had set in, and the very forgetfulness, in the fervour of his argumentation, of the purpose for which he was there, aided in preventing the appearance from benumbing the mind. Consequently, it acted as a new impulse, – a sudden stroke which increased the velocity of the body already in motion, whilst it altered the direction. The co–presence of Horatio, Marcellus and Bernardo is most judiciously contrived; for it renders the courage of Hamlet and his impetuous eloquence perfectly intelligible. The knowledge, – the unthought of consciousness, – the sensation, – of human auditors, – of flesh and blood sympathists – acts as a support and a stimulation *a tergo*, while the front of the mind, the whole consciousness of the speaker, is filled, yea, absorbed, by the apparition. Add too, that the apparition itself has by its previous appearances been brought nearer to a thing of this world. This accrescence of objectivity in a Ghost that yet retains all its ghostly attributes and fearful subjectivity, is truly wonderful.

Ib. sc. 5. Hamlet's speech:–

"O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?

And shall I couple hell? –"

I remember nothing equal to this burst unless it be the first speech of Prometheus in the Greek drama, after the exit of Vulcan and the two Afrites. But Shakspere alone could have produced the vow of Hamlet to make his memory a blank of all maxims and generalized truths, that "observation had copied there," – followed immediately by the speaker noting down the generalized fact,

"That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain!"

Ib.

"*Mar.* Hillo, ho, ho, my lord!

Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come bird, come," &c.

This part of the scene after Hamlet's interview with the Ghost has been charged with an improbable eccentricity. But the truth is, that after the mind has been stretched beyond its usual pitch and tone, it must either sink into exhaustion and inanity, or seek relief by change. It is thus well known that persons conversant in deeds of cruelty, contrive to escape from conscience, by connecting something of the ludicrous with them, and by inventing grotesque terms and a certain technical phraseology to disguise the horror of their practices. Indeed, paradoxical as it may appear, the terrible by a law of the human mind always touches on the verge of the ludicrous. Both arise from the perception of something out of the common order of things – something, in fact, out of its place; and if from this we can abstract danger, the uncommonness will alone remain, and the sense of the ridiculous be excited. The close alliance of these opposites – they are not contraries – appears from the circumstance, that laughter is equally the expression of extreme anguish and horror as of joy: as there are tears of sorrow and tears of joy, so is there a laugh of terror and

a laugh of merriment. These complex causes will naturally have produced in Hamlet the disposition to escape from his own feelings of the overwhelming and supernatural by a wild transition to the ludicrous, – a sort of cunning bravado, bordering on the flights of delirium. For you may, perhaps, observe that Hamlet's wildness is but half false; he plays that subtle trick of pretending to act only when he is very near really being what he acts.

The subterraneous speeches of the Ghost are hardly defensible:– but I would call your attention to the characteristic difference between this Ghost, as a superstition connected with the most mysterious truths of revealed religion, – and Shakspere's constant reverence in his treatment of it, – and the foul earthly witcheries and wild language in "Macbeth".

Act ii. sc. 1. Polonius and Reynaldo.

In all things dependent on, or rather made up of, fine address, the manner is no more or otherwise rememberable than the light motions, steps, and gestures of youth and health. But this is almost everything: – no wonder, therefore, if that which can be put down by rule in the memory should appear to us as mere poring, maudlin, cunning, – slyness blinking through the watery eye of superannuation. So in this admirable scene, Polonius, who is throughout the skeleton of his own former skill and statecraft, hunts the trail of policy at a dead scent, supplied by the weak fever–smell in his own nostrils.

Ib. sc. 2. Speech of Polonius: –

"My liege, and madam, to expostulate," &c.

Warburton's note:

"Then as to the jingles, and play on words, let us but look into the sermons of Dr. Donne (the wittiest man of that age), and we shall find them full of this vein."

I have, and that most carefully, read Dr. Donne's sermons, and find none of these jingles. The great art of an orator – to make whatever he talks of appear of importance – this, indeed, Donne has effected with consummate skill.

Ib.

"*Ham*. Excellent well;
You are a fishmonger."

That is, you are sent to fish out this secret. This is Hamlet's own meaning.

Ib.

"*Ham*. For if the sun breeds maggots in a dead dog,
Being a god, kissing carrion –"

These purposely obscure lines, I rather think, refer to some thought in Hamlet's mind, contrasting the lovely daughter with such a tedious old fool, her father, as he, Hamlet, represents Polonius to himself: – "Why, fool as he is, he is some degrees in rank above a dead dog's carcase; and if the sun, being a god that kisses carrion, can raise life out of a dead dog, – why may not good fortune, that favours fools, have raised a lovely girl out of this dead–alive old fool?" Warburton is often led astray, in his interpretations, by his attention to general positions without the due Shakespearian reference to what is probably passing in the mind of his speaker, characteristic, and expository of his particular character and present mood. The subsequent passage, –

"O Jephtha, judge of Israel! what a treasure hadst thou!"

is confirmatory of my view of these lines.

Ib.

"*Ham.* You cannot, Sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal;

except my life, except my life, except my life."

This repetition strikes me as most admirable.

Ib.

"*Ham.* Then are our beggars, bodies; and our monarchs, and outstretched heroes, the beggars' shadows."

I do not understand this; and Shakspere seems to have intended the meaning not to be more than snatched at : "By my fay, I cannot reason!"

Ib.

"The rugged Pyrrhus – he whose sable arms," &c.

This admirable substitution of the epic for the dramatic, giving such a reality to the impassioned dramatic diction of Shakspere's own dialogue, and authorized, too, by the actual style of the tragedies before his time ("Porrex and Ferrex", "Titus Andronicus," &c.) – is well worthy of notice. The fancy, that a burlesque was intended, sinks below criticism: the lines, as epic narrative, are superb.

In the thoughts, and even in the separate parts of the diction, this description is highly poetical: in truth, taken by itself, this is its fault that it is too poetical! – the language of the lyric vehemence and epic pomp, and not of the drama. But if Shakspere had made the diction truly dramatic, where would have been the contrast between "Hamlet" and the play in "Hamlet?"

Ib.

"– had seen the *mobled* queen," &c.

A mob–cap is still a word in common use for a morning cap, which conceals the whole head of hair, and passes under the chin. It is nearly the same as the night–cap, that is, it is an imitation of it, so as to answer the purpose ("I am not drest for company"), and yet reconciling it with neatness and perfect purity.

Ib. Hamlet's soliloquy:

"O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!" &c.

This is Shakspere's own attestation to the truth of the idea of Hamlet which I have before put forth.

Ib.

"The spirit that I have seen,
May be a devil: and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and, perhaps
Out of my weakness, and my melancholy,
(As he is very potent with such spirits)
Abuses me to damn me."

See Sir Thomas Brown:

"I believe – that those apparitions and ghosts of departed persons are not the wandering souls of men, but the unquiet walks of devils, prompting and suggesting us unto mischief, blood and villainy, instilling and stealing into our hearts, that the blessed spirits are not at rest in their graves, but wander solicitous of the affairs of the world." – *Relig. Med.* Pt. I. Sect. 37.

Act iii. sc. 1.

"To be, or not to be, that is the question," &c.

This speech is of absolutely universal interest, – and yet to which of all Shakspere's characters could it have been appropriately given but to Hamlet? For Jaques it would have been too deep, and for Iago too habitual a communication with the heart; which in every man belongs, or ought to belong, to all mankind.

Ib.

"That undiscover'd country, from whose bourne
No traveller returns –"

Theobald's note in defence of the supposed contradiction of this in the apparition of the Ghost.

> O miserable defender! If it be necessary to remove the apparent contradiction, – if it be not rather a great beauty, – surely, it were easy to say, that no traveller returns to this world, as to his home, or abiding-place.

Ib.

"*Ham.* Ha, ha! are you honest?
Oph. My lord?
Ham. Are you fair?"

Here it is evident that the penetrating Hamlet perceives, from the strange and forced manner of Ophelia, that the sweet girl was not acting a part of her own, but was a decoy; and his after speeches are not so much directed to her as to the listeners and spies. Such a discovery in a mood so anxious and irritable accounts for a certain

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harshness in him; – and yet a wild up–working of love, sporting with opposites in a wilful self–tormenting strain of irony, is perceptible throughout. "I did love you once:" – "I loved you not:" – and particularly in his enumeration of the faults of the sex from which Ophelia is so free, that the mere freedom therefrom constitutes her character. Note Shakspere's charm of composing the female character by the absence of characters, that is, marks and outjuttings.

Ib. Hamlet's speech:–

"I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already,
all but one, shall live: the rest shall keep as they are."

Observe this dallying with the inward purpose, characteristic of one who had not brought his mind to the steady acting point. He would fain sting the uncle's mind;– but to stab his body! – The soliloquy of Ophelia, which follows, is the perfection of love – so exquisitely unselfish!

Ib. sc. 2. This dialogue of Hamlet with the players is one of the happiest instances of Shakspere's power of diversifying the scene while he is carrying on the plot.

Ib.

"*Ham.* My lord, you play'd once i' the university, you say?" (*To Polonius*.)

To have kept Hamlet's love for Ophelia before the audience in any direct form, would have made a breach in the unity of the interest;– but yet to the thoughtful reader it is suggested by his spite to poor Polonius, whom he cannot let rest.

Ib. The style of the interlude here is distinguished from the real dialogue by rhyme, as in the first interview with the players by epic verse.

Ib.

"*Ros.* My lord, you once did love me.

Ham. So I do still, by these pickers and stealers."

I never heard an actor give this word "so" its proper emphasis. Shakspere's meaning is – "loved you? Hum! – so I do still, &c." There has been no change in my opinion:– I think as ill of you as I did. Else Hamlet tells an ignoble falsehood, and a useless one, as the last speech to Guildernstern – "Why, look you now," &c. – proves.

Ib. Hamlet's soliloquy:–

"Now could I drink hot blood,

And do such business as the bitter day

Would quake to look on."

The utmost at which Hamlet arrives, is a disposition, a mood, to do something:– but what to do, is still left undecided, while every word he utters tends to betray his disguise. Yet observe how perfectly equal to any call of the moment is Hamlet, let it only not be for the future.

Ib. sc. 4. Speech of Polonius. Polonius's volunteer obtrusion of himself into this business, while it is appropriate to his character, still itching after former importance, removes all likelihood that Hamlet should suspect his presence, and prevents us from making his death injure Hamlet in our opinion.

Ib. The king's speech:–

"O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven," &c.

This speech well marks the difference between crime and guilt of habit. The conscience here is still admitted to audience. Nay, even as an audible soliloquy, it is far less improbable than is supposed by such as have watched men only in the beaten road of their feelings. But the final – "all may be well!" is remarkable;– the degree of merit attributed by the self–flattering soul to its own struggle, though baffled, and to the indefinite half–promise, half–command, to persevere in religious duties. The solution is in the divine *medium* of the Christian doctrine of expiation:– not what you have done, but what you must determine.

Ib. Hamlet's speech:–

"Now might I do it, pat, now he is praying:
And now I'll do it:– And so he goes to heaven:
And so am I revenged? That would be scann'd," &c.

Dr. Johnson's mistaking of the marks of reluctance and procrastination for impetuous, horror–striking fiendishness! – Of such importance is it to understand the germ of the character. But the interval taken by Hamlet's speech is truly awful! And then –

"My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
Words without thoughts, never to heaven go," –

O what a lesson concerning the essential difference between wishing and willing, and the folly of all motive–mongering, while the individual self remains!

Ib. sc. 4.

"*Ham.* A bloody deed;– almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.
Queen. As kill a king?"

I confess that Shakspere has left the character of the Queen in an unpleasant perplexity. Was she, or was she not, conscious of the fratricide?

Act iv. sc. 2.

"*Ros.* Take you me for a spunge, my lord?
Ham. Ay, Sir; that soaks up the King's countenance, his rewards, his authorities," &c.

Hamlet's madness is made to consist in the free utterance of all the thoughts that had passed through his mind before;– in fact, in telling home–truths.

Act iv. sc. 5. Ophelia's singing. O, note the conjunction here of these two thoughts that had never subsisted in disjunction, the love for Hamlet, and her filial love, with the guileless floating on the surface of her pure imagination of the cautions so lately expressed, and the fears not too delicately avowed, by her father and brother concerning the dangers to which her honour lay exposed. Thought, affliction, passion, murder itself – she turns to favour and prettiness. This play of association is instanced in the close:–

"My brother shall know of it, and I thank you for your good counsel."

Ib. Gentleman's speech:–
"And as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every ward –
They cry," &c.

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Fearful and self–suspicious as I always feel, when I seem to see an error of judgement in Shakspere, yet I cannot reconcile the cool, and, as Warburton calls it, "rational and consequential," reflection in these lines with the anonymousness or the alarm, of this Gentleman or Messenger, as he is called in other editions.

Ib. King's speech:–

"There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will."

Proof, as indeed all else is, that Shakspere never intended us to see the King with Hamlet's eyes; though, I suspect, the managers have long done so.

Ib. Speech of Laertes:–

"To hell, allegiance! vows to the blackest devil!"
"Laertes is a *good* character, but," &c. WARBURTON.

Mercy on Warburton's notion of goodness! Please to refer to the seventh scene of this act;–

"I will do it;
And for this purpose I'll anoint my sword," &c.

uttered by Laertes after the King's description of Hamlet;–

"He being remiss,
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils."

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Yet I acknowledge that Shakspere evidently wishes, as much as possible, to spare the character of Laertes, – to break the extreme turpitude of his consent to become an agent and accomplice of the King's treachery;– and to this end he re–introduces Ophelia at the close of this scene to afford a probable stimulus of passion in her brother.

Ib. sc. 6. Hamlet's capture by the pirates. This is almost the only play of Shakspere, in which mere accidents, independent of all will, form an essential part of the plot, – but here how judiciously in keeping with the character of the over–meditative Hamlet, ever at last determined by accident or by a fit of passion!

Ib. sc. 7. Note how the King first awakens Laertes's vanity by praising the reporter, and then gratifies it by the report itself, and finally points it by –

"Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy!" –

Ib. King's speech:
"For goodness, growing to a *pleurisy*,
Dies in his own too much."

Theobald's note from Warburton, who conjectures "plethory."

I rather think that Shakspere meant "pleurisy," but involved in it the thought of *plethora*, as supposing pleurisy to arise from too much blood; otherwise I cannot explain the following line –

"And then this *should* is like a spendthrift sigh,
That hurts by easing."

In a stitch in the side every one must have heaved a sigh that "hurt by easing."

Since writing the above I feel confirmed that "pleurisy" is the right word; for I find that in the old medical dictionaries the pleurisy is often called the "plethory."

Ib.

"*Queen.* Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

Laer. Drown'd! O, where?"

That Laertes might be excused in some degree for not cooling, the Act concludes with the affecting death of Ophelia, – who in the beginning lay like a little projection of land into a lake or stream, covered with spray–flowers quietly reflected in the quiet waters, but at length is undermined or loosened, and becomes a faery isle, and after a brief vagrancy sinks almost without an eddy!

Act v. sc. 1. O, the rich contrast between the Clowns and Hamlet, as two extremes! You see in the former the mockery of logic, and a traditional wit valued, like truth, for its antiquity, and treasured up, like a tune, for use.

Ib. sc. 1 and 2. Shakspere seems to mean all Hamlet's character to be brought together before his final disappearance from the scene;– his meditative excess in the grave–digging, his yielding to passion with Laertes, his love for Ophelia blazing out, his tendency to generalize on all occasions in the dialogue with Horatio, his fine gentlemanly manners with Osrick, and his and Shakspere's own fondness for presentiment:

"But thou would'st not think, how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter."

1800. Charles **LAMB**. (1775-1834)

On The Tragedies of Shakespeare. Considered with Reference to ***Their Fitness for Stage Representation.*** written 1811.

Part 1.

Taking a turn the other day in the Abbey, I was struck with the affected attitude of a figure, which I do not remember to have seen before, and which upon examination proved to be a whole-length of the celebrated Mr. Garrick. Though I would not go so far with some good Catholics abroad as to shut players altogether out of consecrated ground, yet I own I was not a little scandalized at the introduction of theatrical airs and gestures into a place set apart to remind us of the saddest realities. Going nearer, I found inscribed under this harlequin figure the following lines:

To paint fair Nature, by divine command,
Her magic pencil in his glowing hand,
A Shakespeare rose: then, to expand his fame
Wide o'er this breathing world, a Garrick came.
Though sunk in death the forms the Poet drew
The Actor's genius made them breathe anew;
Though, like the bard himself, in night they lay,
Immortal Garrick call'd them back to day:
And till Eternity with power sublime
Shall mark the mortal hour of hoary Time,

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Shakespeare and Garrick like twin-stars shall shine,
And earth irradiate with a beam divine.

It would be an insult to my readers' understandings to attempt anything like a criticism on this farrago of false thoughts and nonsense. But the reflection it led me into was a kind of wonder, how, from the days of the actor here celebrated to our own, it should have been the fashion to compliment every performer in his turn, that has had the luck to please the town in any of the great characters of Shakespeare, with a notion of possessing a mind congenial to the poet's; how people should come thus unaccountably to confound the power of originating poetical images and conceptions with the faculty of being able to read or recite the same when put into words; [1] or what connection that absolute mastery over the heart and soul of man, which a great dramatic poet possesses, has with those low tricks upon the eye and ear, which a player by observing a few general effects, which some common passion, as grief, anger, etc., usually has upon the gestures and exterior, can easily compass. To know the internal workings and movements of a great mind, of an Othello or a Hamlet, for instance, the when and the why and the how far they should be moved; to what pitch a passion is becoming; to give the reins and to pull in the curb exactly at the moment when the drawing in or the slacking is most graceful; seems to demand a reach of intellect of a vastly different extent from that which is employed upon the bare imitation of the signs of these passions in the countenance or gesture, which signs are usually observed to be most lively and emphatic in the weaker sort of minds, and which signs can after all but indicate some passion, as I said before, anger, or grief, generally; but of the motives and grounds of the passion, wherein it differs from the same passion in low and vulgar natures, of these the actor can give no more idea by his face or gesture than the eye (without a metaphor) can speak, or the muscles utter intelligible sounds. But such is the instantaneous nature of the impressions which we take in at the eye and ear at a playhouse, compared with the slow apprehension oftentimes of the understanding in reading, that we are apt not

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only to sink the play-writer in the consideration which we pay to the actor, but even to identify in our minds in a perverse manner, the actor with the character which he represents. It is difficult for a frequent play-goer to disembarrass the idea of Hamlet from the person and voice of Mr. K. We speak of Lady Macbeth, while we are in reality thinking of Mrs. S. Nor is this confusion incidental alone to unlettered persons, who, not possessing the advantage of reading, are necessarily dependent upon the stage-player for all the pleasure which they can receive from the drama, and to whom the very idea of what an author is cannot be made comprehensible without some pain and perplexity of mind: the error is one from which persons otherwise not meanly lettered find it almost impossible to extricate themselves.

Never let me be so ungrateful as to forget the very high degree of satisfaction which I received some years back from seeing for the first time a tragedy of Shakespeare performed, in which these two great performers sustained the principal parts. It seemed to embody and realize conceptions which had hitherto assumed no distinct shape. But dearly do we pay all our life afterwards for this juvenile pleasure, this sense of distinctness. When the novelty is past, we find to our cost that, instead of realising an idea, we have only materialized and brought down a fine vision to the standard of flesh and blood. We have let go a dream, in quest of an unattainable substance.

How cruelly this operates upon the mind, to have its free conceptions thus cramped and pressed down to the measure of a straitlacing actuality, may be judged from that delightful sensation of freshness, with which we turn to those plays of Shakespeare which have escaped being performed, and to those passages in the acting plays of the same writer which have happily been left out of the performance. How far the very custom of hearing anything spouted, withers and blows upon a fine passage, may be seen in those speeches from Henry the Fifth, etc., which are current in the mouths of school-boys from their being to be found in Enfield Speakers, and such kind of books. I confess myself utterly unable to appreciate that celebrated soliloquy in Hamlet, beginning „To be, or not to be," or to tell whether it

be good, bad, or indifferent, it has been so handled and pawed about by declamatory boys and men, and torn so inhumanly from its living place and principle of continuity in the play, till it is become to me a perfect dead member.

It may seem a paradox, but I cannot help being of opinion that the plays of Shakespeare are less calculated for performance on a stage than those of almost any other dramatist whatever. Their distinguished excellence is a reason that they should be so. There is so much in them, which comes not under the province of acting, with which eye, and tone, and gesture, have nothing to do.

The glory of the scenic art is to personate passion, and the turns of passion; and the more coarse and palpable the passion is, the more hold upon the eyes and ears of the spectators the performer obviously possesses. For this reason, scolding scenes, scenes where two persons talk themselves into a fit of fury, and then in a surprising manner talk themselves out of it again, have always been the most popular upon our stage. And the reason is plain, because the spectators are here most palpably appealed to, they are the proper judges in this war of words, they are the legitimate ring that should be formed round such „intellectual prize-fighters." Talking is the direct object of the imitation here. But in the best dramas, and in Shakespeare above all, how obvious it is, that the form of speaking, whether it be in soliloquy or dialogue, is only a medium, and often a highly artificial one, for putting the reader or spectator into possession of that knowledge of the inner structure and workings of mind in a character, which he could otherwise never have arrived at in that form of composition by any gift short of intuition. We do here as we do with novels written in the epistolary form. How many improprieties, perfect solecisms in letter-writing, do we put up with in „Clarissa" and other books, for the sake of the delight which that form upon the whole gives us.

But the practice of stage representation reduces everything to a controversy of elocution. Every character, from the boisterous blasphemings of Bajazet to the shrinking timidity of womanhood, must play the orator. The love-dialogues of Romeo and Juliet, those silver-sweet sounds of lovers' tongues by night; the more

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intimate and sacred sweetness of nuptial colloquy between an Othello or a Posthumus with their married wives, all those delicacies which are so delightful in the reading, as when we read of those youthful dalliances in Paradise

> As beseem'd
> Fair couple link'd in happy nuptial league,
> Alone:

by the inherent fault of stage representation, how are these things sullied and turned from their very nature by being exposed to a large assembly; when such speeches as Imogen addresses to her lord, come drawling out of the mouth of a hired actress, whose courtship, though nominally addressed to the personated Posthumus, is manifestly aimed at the spectators, who are to judge of her endearments and her returns of love.

The character of Hamlet is perhaps that by which, since the days of Betterton, a succession of popular performers have had the greatest ambition to distinguish themselves. The length of the part may be one of their reasons. But for the character itself, we find it in a play, and therefore we judge it a fit subject of dramatic representation. The play itself abounds in maxims and reflections beyond any other, and therefore we consider it as a proper vehicle or conveying moral instruction. But Hamlet himself – what does he suffer meanwhile by being dragged forth as a public schoolmaster, to give lectures to the crowd! Why, nine parts in ten of what Hamlet does, are transactions between himself and his moral sense, they are the effusions of his solitary musings, which he retires to holes and corners and the most sequestered parts of the palace to pour forth; or rather, they are the silent meditations with which his bosom is bursting, reduced to words for the sake of the reader, who must else remain ignorant of what is passing there. These profound sorrows, these light-and-noise-abhorring ruminations, which the tongue scare dares utter to deaf walls and chambers, how can they be represented by a gesticulating actor, who comes and

mouths them out before an audience, making four hundred people his confidants at once? I say not that it is the fault of the actor so to do; he must pronounce them ore rotundo, he must accompany them with his eye, he must insinuate them into his auditory by some trick of eye, tone, or gesture, or he fails. *He must be thinking all the while of his appearance, because he knows that all the while the spectators are judging of it*. And this is the way to represent the shy, negligent, retiring Hamlet.

It is true that there is no other mode of conveying a vast quantity of thought and feeling to a great portion of the audience, who otherwise would never learn it for themselves by reading, and the intellectual acquisition gained this way may, for aught I know, be inestimable; but I am not arguing that Hamlet should not be acted, but how much Hamlet is made another thing by being acted. I have heard much of the wonders which Garrick performed in this part; but as I never saw him, I must have leave to doubt whether the representation of such a character came within the province of his art. Those who tell me of him, speak of his eye, of the magic of his eye, and of his commanding voice: physical properties, vastly desirable in an actor, and without which he can never insinuate meaning into an auditory, – but what have they to do with Hamlet? what have they to do with intellect? In fact, the things aimed at in theatrical representation, are to arrest the spectator's eye upon the form and the gesture, and so to gain a more favourable hearing to what is spoken: it is not what the character is, but how he looks; not what he says, but how he speaks it. I see no reason to think that if the play of Hamlet were written over again by some such writer as Banks or Lillo, retaining the process of the story, but totally omitting all the poetry of it, all the divine features of Shakespeare, his stupendous intellect; and only taking care to give us enough of passionate dialogue, which Banks or Lillo were never at a loss to furnish; I see not how the effect could be much different upon an audience, nor how the actor has it in his power to represent Shakespeare to us differently from his representation of Banks or Lillo. Hamlet would still be a youthful accomplished prince, and must be gracefully personated; he might be puzzled in his mind, wavering in his conduct, seemingly cruel to Ophelia, he might

see a ghost, and start at it, and address it kindly when he found it to be his father; all this in the poorest and most homely language of the servilest creeper after nature that ever consulted the palate of an audience; without troubling Shakespeare for the matter; and I see not but there would be room for all the power which an actor has, to display itself. All the passions and changes of passion might remain; for those are much less difficult to write or act than is thought; it is a trick easy to be attained, it is but rising or falling a note or two in the voice, a whisper with a significant foreboding look to announce its approach, and so contagious the counterfeit appearance of any emotion is, that let the words be what they will, the look and tone shall carry it off and make it pass for deep skill in the passions.

It is common for people to talk of Shakespeare's plays being so natural, that everybody can understand him. They are natural indeed, they are grounded deep in nature, so deep that the depth of them lies out of the reach of most of us. You shall hear the same persons say that George Barnwell is very natural, and Othello is very natural, that they are both very deep; and to them they are the same kind of thing. At the one they sit and shed tears, because a good sort of young man is tempted by a naughty woman to commit a trifling peccadillo, the murder of an uncle or so,[2] that is all, and so comes to an untimely end, which is so moving; and at the other, because a blackamoor in a fit of jealousy kills his innocent white wife: and the odds are that ninety-nine out of a hundred would willingly behold the same catastrophe happen to both the heroes, and have thought the rope more due to Othello than to Barnwell. For of the texture of Othello's mind, the inward construction marvellously laid open with all its strengths and weaknesses, its heroic confidences and its human misgivings, its agonies of hate springing from the depths of love, they see no more than the spectators at a cheaper rate, who pay their pennies apiece to look through the man's telescope in Leicester Fields, see into the inward plot and topography of the moon. Some dim thing or other they see, they see an actor personating a passion, of grief, or anger, for instance, and they recognize it as a copy of the usual external effects of such passions; or at least as being true to that symbol of the emotion which

passes current at the theatre for it, for it is often no more than that: but of the grounds of the passion, its correspondence to a great or heroic nature, which is the only worthy object of tragedy, – that common auditors know anything of this, or can have any such notions dinned into them by the mere strength of an actor's lungs, – that apprehensions foreign to them should be thus infused into them by storm, I can neither believe, nor understand how it can be possible.

We talk of Shakespeare's admirable observation of life, when we should feel that not from a petty inquisition into those cheap and every-day characters which surrounded him, as they surround us, but from his own mind, which was, to borrow a phrase of Ben Jonson's, the very „sphere of humanity," he fetched those images of virtue and of knowledge, of which every one of us recognizing a part, think we comprehend in our natures the whole; and oftentimes mistake the powers which he positively creates in us for nothing more than indigenous faculties of our own minds, which only waited the application of corresponding virtues in him to return a full and clear echo of the same.

To return to Hamlet. – Among the distinguishing features of that wonderful character, one of the most interesting (yet painful) is that soreness of mind which makes him treat the intrusions of Polonius with harshness, and that asperity which he puts on in his interviews with Ophelia. These tokens of an unhinged mind (if they be not mixed in the latter case with a profound artifice of love, to alienate Ophelia by affected discourtesies, so to prepare her mind for the breaking off of that loving intercourse, which can no longer find a place amidst business so serious as that which he has to do) are parts of his character, which to reconcile with our admiration of Hamlet, the most patient consideration of his situation is no more than necessary; they are what we forgive afterwards, and explain by the whole of his character, but at the time they are harsh and unpleasant. Yet such is the actor's necessity of giving strong blows to the audience, that I have never seen a player in this character, who did not exaggerate and strain to the utmost these ambiguous features, – these temporary deformities in the character. They make him express a vulgar scorn at

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Polonius which utterly degrades his gentility, and which no explanation can render palatable; they make him show contempt, and curl up the nose at Ophelia's father, – contempt in its very grossest and most hateful form; but they get applause by it: it is natural, people say; that is, the words are scornful, and the actor expresses scorn, and that they can judge of: but why so much scorn, and of that sort, they never think of asking.

So to Ophelia. – All the Hamlets that I have ever seen, rant and rave at her as if she had committed some great crime, and the audience are highly pleased, because the words of the part are satirical, and they are enforced by the strongest expression of satirical indignation of which the face and voice are capable. But then, whether Hamlet is likely to have put on such brutal appearances to a lady whom he loved so dearly, is never thought on. The truth is, that in all such deep affections as had subsisted between Hamlet and Ophelia, there is a stock of supererogatory love (if I may venture to use the expression), which in any great grief of heart, especially where that which preys upon the mind cannot be communicated, confers a kind of indulgence upon the grieved party to express itself, even to its heart's dearest object, in the language of a temporary alienation; but it is not alienation, it is a distraction purely, and so it always makes itself to be felt by that object: it is not anger, but grief assuming the appearance of anger, – love awkwardly counterfeiting hate, as sweet countenances when they try to frown: but such sternness and fierce disgust as Hamlet is made to show, is no counterfeit, but the real face of absolute aversion, – of irreconcilable alienation. It may be said he puts on the madman; but then he should only so far put on this counterfeit lunacy as his own real distraction will give him leave; that is, incompletely, imperfectly; not in that confirmed, practised way, like a master of his art, or a Dame Quickly would say, „like one of those harlotry players."

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Part 2.

I mean no disrespect to any actor, but the sort of pleasure which Shakespeare's plays give in the acting seems to me not at all to differ from that which the audience receive from those of other writers; and, they being in themselves essentially so different from all others, I must conclude that there is something in the nature of acting which levels all distinctions. And in fact, who does not speak indifferently of the Gamester and of Macbeth as fine stage performances, and praise the Mrs. Beverley in the same way as the Lady Macbeth of Mrs. S.? Belvidera, and Calista, and Isabella, and Euphrasia, are they less liked than Imogen, or than Juliet, or than Desdemona? Are they not spoken of and remembered in the same way? Is not the female performer as great (as they call it) in one as in the other? Did not Garrick shine, and was he not ambitious of shining in every drawling tragedy that his wretched day produced, – the productions of the Hills and the Murphys and the Browns, – and shall he have that honour to dwell in our minds for ever as an inseparable concomitant with Shakespeare? A kindred mind! O who can read that affecting sonnet of Shakespeare which alludes to his profession as a player:

Oh for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than public means which public custom [manners] breeds –
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand;
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand –
Or that other confession;
Alas! 'tis true, I have gone here and there,
And made myself a motley to the view,

Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear –

Who can read these instances of jealous self-watchfulness in our sweet Shakespeare, and dream of any congeniality between him and one that, by every tradition of him, appears to have been as mere a player as ever existed; to have had his mind tainted with the lowest player's vices, – envy and jealousy, and miserable cravings after applause; one who in the exercise of his profession was jealous even of the women-performers that stood in his way; a manager full of managerial tricks and stratagems and finesse: that any resemblance should be dreamed of between him and Shakespeare, – Shakespeare who, in the plenitude and consciousness of his own powers, could with that noble modesty, which we can neither imitate nor appreciate, express himself thus of his own sense of his own defects:

Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd:
Desiring *this man's art, and that man's scope.*

I am almost disposed to deny to Garrick the merits of being an admirer of Shakespeare. A true lover of his excellences he certainly was not; for would any true lover of them have admitted into his matchless scenes such ribald trash as Tate and Cibber, and the rest of them, that

With their darkness durst affront his light,

have foisted into the acting plays of Shakespeare? I believe it impossible that he could have had a proper reverence for Shakespeare, and have condescended to go through that interpolated scene in Richard the Third, in which Richard tries to break his wife's heart by telling her he loves another woman, and says, „if she survives this she is immortal." Yet I doubt not he delivered this vulgar stuff with as much anxiety

of emphasis as any of the genuine parts: and for acting, it is as well calculated as any. But we have seen the part of Richard lately produce great fame to an actor by his manner of playing it, and it lets us into the secret of acting, and of popular judgments of Shakespeare derived from acting. Not one of the spectators who have witnessed Mr. C.'s exertions in that part, but has come away with a proper conviction that Richard is a very wicked man, and kills little children in their beds, with something like the pleasure which the giants and ogres in children's books are represented to have taken in that practice; moreover, that he is very close and shrewd, and devilish cunning, for you could see that by his eye.

But is in fact this the impression we have in reading the Richard of Shakespeare? Do we feel anything like disgust, as we do at that butcher-like representation of him that passes for him on the stage? A horror at his crimes blends with the effect which we feel, but how is it qualified, how is it carried off, by the rich intellect which he displays, his resources, his wit, his buoyant spirits, his vast knowledge and insight into characters, the poetry of his part – not an atom of all which is made perceivable in Mr. C.'s way of acting it. Nothing but his crimes, his actions, is visible; they are prominent and staring; the murderer stands out, but where is the lofty genius, the man of vast capacity, – the profound, the witty, accomplished Richard?

The truth is, the characters of Shakespeare are so much the objects of meditation rather than of interest of curiosity as to their actions, that while we are reading any of his great criminal characters, – Macbeth, Richard, even Iago, – we think not so much of the crimes which they commit, as of the ambition, the aspiring spirit, the intellectual activity which prompts them to overleap those moral fences. Barnwell is a wretched murderer; there is a certain fitness between his neck and the rope; he is the legitimate heir to the gallows; nobody who thinks at all can think of any alleviating circumstances in his case to make him a fit object of mercy. Or to take an instance from the higher tragedy, what else but a mere assassin in Glenalvon! Do we think of anything but of the crime which he commits, and the rack which he

deserves? That is all which we really think about him. Whereas in corresponding characters in Shakespeare so little do the actions comparatively affect us, that while the impulses, the inner mind in all its perverted greatness, solely seems real and is exclusively attended to, the crime is comparatively nothing. But when we see these things represented, the acts which they do are comparatively everything, their impulses nothing. The state of sublime emotion into which we are elevated by those images of night and horror which Macbeth is made to utter, that solemn prelude with which he entertains the time till the bell shall strike which is to call him to murder Duncan, – when we no longer read it in a book, when we have given up that vantage-ground of abstraction which reading possesses over seeing, and come to see a man in his bodily shape before our eyes actually preparing to commit a murder, if the acting be true and impressive, as I have witnessed it in Mr. K.'s performance of that part, the painful anxiety about the act, the natural longing to prevent it while it yet seems unperpetrated, the too close pressing semblance of reality, give a pain and an uneasiness which totally destroy all the delight which the words in the book convey, where the deed doing never presses upon us with the painful sense of presence: it rather seems to belong to history, – to something past and inevitable, if it has anything to do with time at all. The sublime images, the poetry alone, is that which is present to our minds in the reading.

So to see Lear acted, – to see an old man tottering about the stage with a walking-stick, turned out of doors by his daughters in a rainy night, has nothing in it but what is painful and disgusting. We want to take him into shelter and relieve him. That is all the feeling which the acting of Lear ever produced in me. But the Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements, than any actor can be to represent Lear: they might more easily propose to personate the Satan of Milton upon a stage, or one of Michael Angelo's terrible figures. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual: the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano: they are storms

turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea his mind, with all its vast riches. It is his mind which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on; even as he himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage; while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear, – we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms; in the aberrations of his reason, we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning, immethodised from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its powers, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will upon the corruptions and abuses of mankind. What have looks, or tones, to do with that sublime identification of his age with that of the heavens themselves, when in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children, he reminds them that „they themselves are old?" What gestures shall we appropriate to this? What has the voice or the eye to do with such things? But the play is beyond all art, as the tamperings with it show: it is too hard and stony; it must have love-scenes, and a happy ending. It is not enough that Cordelia is a daughter, she must shine as a lover too. Tate has put his hook in the nostrils of this Leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the showmen of scene, to draw the mighty beast about more easily. A happy ending! – as if the living martyrdom that Lear had gone through, – the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world's burden after, why all this pudder and preparation, – why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt-robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station, – as if at his years, and with his experience, anything was left but to die.

Lear is essentially impossible to be represented on a stage. But how many dramatic personages are there in Shakespeare, which though more tractable and feasible (if I may so speak) than Lear, yet from some circumstance, some adjunct to their character, are improper to be shown to our bodily eye. Othello, for instance. Nothing can be more soothing, more flattering to the nobler parts of our natures,

than to read of a young Venetian lady of highest extraction, through the force of love and from a sense of merit in him whom she loved, laying aside every consideration of kindred, and country, and colour, and wedding with a coal-black Moor – (for such he is represented, in the imperfect state of knowledge respecting foreign countries in those days, compared with our own, or in compliance with popular notions, though the Moors are now well enough known to be by many shades less unworthy of white woman's fancy) – it is the perfect triumph of virtue over accidents, of the imagination over the senses. She sees Othello's colour in his mind. But upon the stage, when the imagination is no longer the ruling faculty, but we are left to our poor unassisted senses, I appeal to every one that has seen Othello played, whether he did not, on the contrary, sink Othello's mind in his colour; whether he did not find something extremely revolting in the courtship and wedded caresses of Othello and Desdemona; and whether the actual sight of the thing did not overweigh all that beautiful compromise which we make in reading; – and the reason it should do so is obvious, because there is just so much reality presented to our senses as to give a perception of disagreement, with not enough of belief in the internal motives, – all that which is unseen, – to overpower and reconcile the first and obvious prejudices.[3]

What we see upon a stage is body and bodily action; what we are conscious of in reading is almost exclusively the mind, and its movements: and this, I think, may sufficiently account for the very different sort of delight with which the same play so often affects us in the reading and the seeing.

It requires little reflection to perceive, that if those characters in Shakespeare which are within the precincts of nature, have yet something in them which appeals too exclusively to the imagination, to admit of their being made objects to the senses without suffering a change and a diminution, – that still stronger the objection must lie against representing another line of characters, which Shakespeare has introduced to give a wildness and a supernatural elevation to his scenes, as if to remove them still further from that assimilation to common life in which their

excellence is vulgarly supposed to consist. When we read the incantations of those terrible beings the Witches in Macbeth, though some of the ingredients of their hellish composition savour of the grotesque, yet is the effect upon us other than the most serious and appalling that can be imagined? Do we not feel spell-bound as Macbeth was? Can any mirth accompany a sense of their presence? We might as well laugh under a consciousness of the principle of Evil himself being truly and really present with us. But attempt to bring these beings on to a stage, and you turn them instantly into so many old women, that men and children are to laugh at. Contrary to the old saying, that „seeing is believing," the sight actually destroys the faith: and the mirth in which we indulge at their expense, when we see these creatures upon a stage, seems to be a sort of indemnification which we make to ourselves for the terror which they put us in when reading made them an object of belief, – when we surrendered up our reason to the poet, as children to their nurses and their elders; and we laugh at our fears, as children who thought they saw something in the dark, triumph when the bringing in of the candle discovers the vanity of their fears. For this exposure of supernatural agents upon a stage is truly bringing in a candle to expose their own delusiveness. It is the solitary taper and the book that generates a faith in these terrors: a ghost by chandelier light, and in good company, deceives no spectators, – a ghost that can be measured by the eye, and his human dimensions made out at leisure. The sight of a well-lighted house and a well-dressed audience, shall arm the most nervous child against any apprehensions: as Tom Brown says of the impenetrable skin of Achilles with his impenetrable armour over it, „Bully Dawson would have fought the devil with such advantages."

Much has been said, and deservedly, in reprobation of the vile mixture which Dryden has thrown into the Tempest: doubtless without some such vicious alloy, the impure ears of that age would never have sate out to hear so much innocence of love as is contained in the sweet courtship of Ferdinand and Miranda. But is the Tempest of Shakespeare at all a subject for stage representation? It is one thing to read of an enchanter, and to believe the wondrous tale while we are reading it; but to have a

conjuror brought before us in his conjuring-gown, with his spirits about him, which none but himself and some hundred of favoured spectators before the curtain are supposed to see, involves such a quantity of the hateful incredible, that all our reverence for the author cannot hinder us from perceiving such gross attempts upon the senses to be in the highest degree childish and inefficient. Spirits and fairies cannot be represented, they cannot even be painted, – they can only be believed. But the elaborate and anxious provision of scenery, which the luxury of the age demands, in these cases works a quite contrary effect to what is intended. That which in comedy, or plays of familiar life, adds so much to the life of the imitation, in plays which appeal to the higher faculties, positively destroys the illusion which it is introduced to aid. A parlour or a drawing-room, – a library opening into a garden, – a garden with an alcove in it, – a street, or the piazza of Covent Garden does well enough in a scene; we are content to give as much credit to it as it demands; or rather, we think little about it, – it is little more than reading at the top of a page, „Scene, a Garden;" we do not imagine ourselves there, but we readily admit the imitation of familiar objects. But to think by the help of painted trees and caverns, which we know to be painted, to transport our minds to Prospero, and his island and his lonely cell; [4] or by the aid of a fiddle dexterously thrown in, in an interval of speaking, to make us believe that we hear those supernatural noises of which the isle was full: – the Orrery Lecturer at the Haymarket might as well hope, by his musical glasses cleverly stationed out of sight behind his apparatus, to make us believe that we do indeed hear the crystal spheres ring out that chime, which if it were to inwrap our fancy long, Milton thinks,

Time would run back and fetch the age of gold,
And speckled vanity
Would sicken soon and die,
And leprous Sin would melt from earthly mould;
Yea Hell itself would pass away,

And leave its dolorous mansions to the peering day.

The Garden of Eden, with our first parents in it, is not more impossible to be shown on a stage than the Enchanted Isle, with its no less interesting and innocent first settlers.

The subject of Scenery is closely connected with that of the Dresses, which are so anxiously attended to on our stage. I remember the last time I saw Macbeth played, the discrepancy I felt at the changes of garment which he varied, – the shiftings and re-shiftings, like a Romish priest at mass. The luxury of stage improvements, and the importunity of the public eye, require this. The coronation robe of the Scottish monarch was fairly a counterpart to that which our King wears when he goes to the Parliament-house, – just so full and cumbersome, and set out with ermine and pearls. And if things must be represented, I see not what to find fault with in this. But in reading, what robe are we conscious of? Some dim images of royalty – a crown and sceptre may float before our eyes, but who shall describe the fashion of it? Do we see in our mind's eye what Webb or any other robe-maker could pattern? This is the inevitable consequence of imitating everything, to make all things natural. Whereas the reading of a tragedy is a fine abstraction. It presents to the fancy just so much of external appearances as to make us feel that we are among flesh and blood, while by far the greater and better part of our imagination is employed upon the thoughts and internal machinery of the character. But in acting, scenery, dress, the most contemptible things, call upon us to judge of their naturalness.

Perhaps it would be no bad similitude, to liken the pleasure which we take in seeing one of these fine plays acted, compared with that quiet delight which we find in the reading of it, to the different feelings with which a reviewer, and a man that is not a reviewer, reads a fine poem. The accursed critical habits, – the being called upon to judge and pronounce, must make it quite a different thing to the former. In seeing these plays acted, we are affected just as judges. When Hamlet compares the

two pictures of Gertrude's first and second husband, who wants to see the pictures? But in the acting, a miniature must be lugged out; which we know not to be the picture, but only to show finely a miniature may be represented. This shewing of everything, levels all things: it makes tricks, bows, and curtseys, of importance. Mrs. S. never got more fame by anything than by the manner in which she dismisses the guests in the banquet-scene in Macbeth: it is as much remembered as any of her thrilling tones or impressive looks. But does such a trifle as this enter into the imaginations of the reader of that wild and wonderful scene? Does not the mind dismiss the feasters as rapidly as it can? Does it care about the gracefulness of the doing it? But by acting, and judging of acting, all these non-essentials are raised into an importance, injurious to the main interest of the play.

I have confined my observations to the tragic parts of Shakespeare. It would be no very difficult task to extend the inquiry to his comedies; and to show why Falstaff, Shallow, Sir Hugh Evans, and the rest are equally incompatible with stage representation. The length to which this Essay has run, will make it, I am afraid, sufficiently distasteful to the Amateurs of the Theatre, without going any deeper into the subject at present.

Notes.

[1] It is observable that we fall into this confusion only in dramatic recitations. We never dream that the gentleman who reads Lucretius in public with great applause, is therefore a great poet and philosopher; nor do we find that Tom Davies, the bookseller, who is recorded to have recited the „Paradise Lost" better than any man in England in his day (though I cannot help thinking there must be some mistake in this tradition) was therefore, by his intimate friends, set upon a level with Milton.

[2] If this note could hope to meet the eye of any of the Managers, I would entreat and beg of them, in the name of both the galleries, that this insult upon the morality of the common people of London should cease to be eternally repeated in the holiday weeks. Why are the 'Prentices of this famous and well-governed city, instead of an amusement, to be treated over and over again with a nauseous sermon of George Barnwell? Why at the end of their vistas are we to place the gallows? Were I an

uncle, I should not much like a nephew of mine to have such an example placed before his eyes. It is really making uncle-murder too trivial to exhibit it as done upon such slight motives; – it is attributing too much to such characters as Millwood; it is putting things into the heads of good young men, which they would never otherwise have dreamed of. Uncles that think anything of their lives, should fairly petition the Chamberlain against it.

[3] The error of supposing that because Othello's colour does not offend us in the reading, it should also not offend us in the seeing, is just such a fallacy as supposing that an Adam and Eve in a picture shall affect us just as they do in the poem. But in the poem we for a while have Paradisaical senses given us, which vanish when we see a man and his wife without clothes in the picture. The painters themselves feel this, as is apparent by the awkward shifts they have recourse to, to make them look not quite naked; by a sort of prophetic anachronism antedating the invention of figleaves. So in the reading of the play, we see with Desdemona's eyes; in the seeing of it, we are forced to look with our own.

[4] It will be said these things are done in pictures. But pictures and scenes are very different things. Painting is a word of itself, but in scene-painting there is the attempt to deceive; and there is the discordancy, never to be got over, between painted scenes and real people.

1800. Walter Savage **LANDOR**. (1775-1864)

Imaginary Conversations. written 1846.

Southey and Landor.

Southey. Of all the beautiful scenery round King's Weston the view from this terrace, and especially from this sundial, is the pleasantest.

Landor. The last time I ever walked hither in company (which, unless with ladies, I rarely have done anywhere) was with a just, a valiant, and a memorable man, Admiral Nichols, who usually spent his summer months at the village of Shirehampton, just below us. There, whether in the morning or evening, it was seldom I found him otherwise engaged than in cultivating his flowers.

Southey. I never had the same dislike to company in my walks and rambles as you profess to have, but of which I perceived no sign whatever when I visited you, first at Llanthony Abbey and afterward on the Lake of Como. Well do I remember our long conversations in the silent and solitary church of Sant' Abondio (surely the coolest spot in Italy), and how often I turned back my head toward the open door, fearing lest some pious passer-by, or some more distant one in the wood above, pursuing the pathway that leads to the tower of Luitprand, should hear the roof echo with your laughter, at the stories you had collected about the brotherhood and sisterhood of the place.

Landor. I have forgotten most of them, and nearly all: but I have not forgotten how we speculated on the possibility that Milton might once have been sitting on the very bench we then occupied, although we do not hear of his having visited that part of the country. Presently we discoursed on his poetry; as we propose to do again this morning.

Southey. In that case, it seems we must continue to be seated on the turf.

Landor. Why so?

Southey. Because you do not like to walk in company: it might disturb and discompose you: and we never lose our temper without losing at the same time many of our thoughts, which are loath to come forward without it.

Landor. From my earliest days I have avoided society as much as I could decorously, for I received more pleasure in the cultivation and improvement of my own thoughts than in walking up and down among the thoughts of others. Yet, as you know, I never have avoided the intercourse of men distinguished by virtue and genius; of genius, because it warmed and invigorated me by my trying to keep pace with it; of virtue, that if I had any of my own it might be called forth by such vicinity. Among all men elevated in station who have made a noise in the world (admirable old expression!) I never saw any in whose presence I felt inferiority, excepting Kosciusco. But how many in the lower paths of life have exerted both virtues and abilities which I never exerted, and never possessed! what strength and courage and perseverance in some, in others what endurance and forbearance! At the very moment when most, beside yourself, catching up half my words, would call and employ against me in its ordinary signification what ought to convey the most honorific, the term *self-sufficiency*, I bow my head before the humble, with greatly more than their humiliation. You are better tempered than I am, and are readier to converse. There are half-hours when, although in good humour and good spirits, I would, not be disturbed by the necessity of talking, to be the possessor of all the rich marshes we see yonder. In this interval there is neither storm nor sunshine of the mind, but calm and (as the farmer would call it) *growing* weather, in which the blades of thought spring up and dilate insensibly. Whatever I do, I must do in the open air, or in the silence of night: either is sufficient: but I prefer the hours of exercise, or, what is next to exercise, of field-repose. Did you happen to know the admiral?

Southey. Not personally: but I believe the terms you have applied to him are well merited. After some experience, he contended that public men, public women, and

the public press, may be all designated by one and the same trisyllable. He is reported to have been a strict disciplinarian. In the mutiny at the Nore he was seized by his crew, and summarily condemned by them to be hanged. Many taunting questions were asked him, to which he made no reply. When the rope was fastened round his neck, the ringleader cried, 'Answer this one thing, however, before you go, sir! What would you do with any of us, if we were in your power as you are now in ours?' The admiral, then captain, looked sternly and contemptuously, and replied, 'Hang you, by God!' Enraged at this answer, the mutineer tugged at the rope: but another on the instant rushed forward, exclaiming, 'No, captain!' (for thus he called the fellow) 'he has been cruel to us, flogging here and flogging there, but before so brave a man is hanged like a dog, you heave me overboard.' Others among the most violent now interceded: and an old seaman, not saying a single word, came forward with his knife in his hand, and cut the noose asunder. Nichols did not thank him, nor notice him, nor speak: but, looking round at the other ships, in which there was the like insubordination, he went toward his cabin slow and silent. Finding it locked, he called to a midshipman: 'Tell that man with a knife to come down and open the door.' After a pause of a few minutes, it was done: but he was confined below until the quelling of the mutiny.

Landor. His conduct as Controller of the Navy was no less magnanimous and decisive. In this office he presided at the trial of Lord Melville. His lordship was guilty, we know, of all the charges brought against him; but, having more patronage than ever minister had before, he refused to answer the questions which (to repeat his own expression) might incriminate him. And his refusal was given with a smile of indifference, a consciousness of security. In those days, as indeed in most others, the main use of power was promotion and protection: and *honest man* was never in any age among the titles of nobility, and has always been the appellation used toward the feeble and inferior by the prosperous. Nichols said on the present occasion, 'If this man is permitted to skulk away under such pretences, trial is here a mockery.' Finding no support, he threw up his office as Controller of the Navy, and

never afterward entered the House of Commons. Such a person, it appears to me, leads us aptly and becomingly to that steadfast patriot on whose writings you promised me your opinion; not incidentally, as before, but turning page after page. It would ill beseem us to treat Milton with generalities. Radishes and salt are the picnic quota of slim spruce reviewers: let us hope to find somewhat more solid and of better taste. Desirous to be a listener and a learner when you discourse on his poetry, I have been more occupied of late in examining the prose.

Southey. Do you retain your high opinion of it?

Landor. Experience makes us more sensible of faults than of beauties. Milton is more correct than Addison, but less correct than Hooker, whom I wish he had been contented to receive as a model in style, rather than authors who wrote in another and a poorer language; such, I think, you are ready to acknowledge is the Latin.

Southey. This was always my opinion.

Landor. However, I do not complain that in oratory and history his diction is sometimes poetical.

Southey. Little do I approve of it in prose on any subject. Demosthenes and Aeschines, Lisias and Isaeus, and finally Cicero, avoided it.

Landor. They did: but Chatham and Burke and Grattan did not; nor indeed the graver and greater Pericles; of whom the most memorable sentence on record is pure poetry. On the fall of the young Athenians in the field of battle, he said, 'The year hath lost its spring.' But how little are these men, even Pericles himself, if you compare them as men of genius with Livy! In Livy, as in Milton, there are bursts of passion which cannot by the nature of things be other than poetical, nor (being so) come forth in other language. If Milton had executed his design of writing a history of England, it would probably have abounded in such diction, especially in the more turbulent scenes and in the darker ages.

Southey. There are quiet hours and places in which a taper may be carried steadily, and show the way along the ground; but you must stand a-tiptoe and raise a blazing torch above your head, if you would bring to our vision the obscure and time-worn

figures depicted on the lofty vaults of antiquity. The philosopher shows everything in one clear light; the historian loves strong reflections and deep shadows, but, above all, prominent and moving characters. We are little pleased with the man who disenchants us: but whoever can make us wonder, must himself (we think) be wonderful, and deserve our admiration.

Landor. Believing no longer in magic and its charms, we still shudder at the story told by Tacitus, of those which were discovered in the mournful house of Germanicus.

Southey. Tacitus was also a great poet, and would have been a greater, had he been more contented with the external and ordinary appearances of things. Instead of which, he looked at a part of his pictures through a prism, and at another part through a *camera obscura*. If the historian were as profuse of moral as of political axioms, we should tolerate him less: for in the political we fancy a writer is but meditating; in the moral we regard him as declaiming. In history we desire to be conversant with only the great, according to our notions of greatness: we take it as an affront, on such an invitation, to be conducted into the lecture-room, or to be desired to amuse ourselves in the study.

Landor. Pray go on. I am desirous of hearing more.

Southey. Being now alone, with the whole day before us, and having carried, as we agreed at breakfast, each his Milton in his pocket, let us collect all the graver faults we can lay our hands upon, without a too minute and troublesome research; not in the spirit of Johnson, but in our own.

Landor. That is, abasing our eyes in reverence to so great a man, but without closing them. The beauties of his poetry we may omit to notice, if we can: but where the crowd claps the hands, it will be difficult for us always to refrain. Johnson, I think, has been charged unjustly with expressing too freely and inconsiderately the blemishes of Milton. There are many more of them than he has noticed.

Southey. If we add any to the number, and the literary world hears of it, we shall raise an outcry from hundreds who never could see either his excellences or his defects, and from several who never have perused the noblest of his writings.

Landor. It may be boyish and mischievous, but I acknowledge I have sometimes felt a pleasure in irritating, by the cast of a pebble, those who stretch forward to the full extent of the chain their open and frothy mouths against me. I shall seize upon this conjecture of yours, and say everything that comes into my head on the subject. Beside which, if any collateral thoughts should spring up, I may throw them in also; as you perceive I have frequently done in my *Imaginary Conversations*, and as we always do in real ones.

Southey. When we adhere to one point, whatever the form, it should rather be called a disquisition than a conversation. Most writers of dialogue take but a single stride into questions the most abstruse, and collect a heap of arguments to be blown away by the bloated whiffs of some rhetorical charlatan, tricked out in a multiplicity of ribbons for the occasion.

Before we open the volume of poetry, let me confess to you I admire his prose less than you do.

Landor. Probably because you dissent more widely from the opinions it conveys: for those who are displeased with anything are unable to confine the displeasure to one spot. We dislike everything a little when we dislike anything much. It must indeed be admitted that his prose is often too latinized and stiff. But I prefer his heavy cut velvet, with its ill-placed Roman fibula, to the spangled gauze and gummed-on flowers and puffy flounces of our present street-walking literature. So do you, I am certain.

Southey. Incomparably. But let those who have gone astray, keep astray, rather than bring Milton into disrepute by pushing themselves into his company and imitating his manner. Milton is none of these: and his language is never a patchwork. We find daily, in almost every book we open, expressions which are not English, never were, and never will be: for the writers are by no means of sufficiently high rank to be

masters of the mint. To arrive at this distinction, it is not enough to scatter in all directions bold, hazardous, undisciplined thoughts: there must be lordly and commanding ones, with a full establishment of well-appointed expressions adequate to their maintenance.

Occasionally I have been dissatisfied with Milton, because in my opinion that is ill said in prose which can be said more plainly. Not so in poetry: if it were, much of Pindar and Aeschylus, and no little of Dante, would be censurable.

Landor. Acknowledge that he whose poetry I am holding in my hand is free from every false ornament in his prose, unless a few bosses of latinity may be called so; and I am ready to admit the full claims of your favourite South. Acknowledge that, heading all the forces of our language, he was the great antagonist of every great monster which infested our country; and he disdained to trim his lion-skin with lace. No other English writer has equalled Raleigh, Hooker, and Milton, in the loftier parts of their works.

Southey. But Hooker and Milton, you allow, are sometimes pedantic. In Hooker there is nothing so elevated as there is in Raleigh.

Landor. Neither he, however, nor any modern, nor any ancient, has attained to that summit on which the sacred ark of Milton strikes and rests. Reflections, such as we indulged in on the borders of the Larius, come over me here again. Perhaps from the very sod where you are sitting, the poet in his youth sate looking at the Sabrina he was soon to celebrate. There is pleasure in the sight of a glebe which never has been broken; but it delights me particularly in those places where great men have been before. I do not mean warriors: for extremely few among the most remarkable of them will a considerate man call great: but poets and philosophers and philanthropists, the ornaments of society, the charmers of solitude, the warders of civilization, the watchmen at the gate which Tyranny would batter down, and the healers of those wounds which she left festering in the field. And now, to reduce this demon into its proper toad-shape again, and to lose sight of it, open your *Paradise Lost*.

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1803. William **HAZLITT**. (1778-1830)

On the Ignorance of the Learned. written 1822.

"On the Ignorance of the Learned"

"For the more languages a man can speak,
His talent has but sprung the greater leak:
And, of the industry he has spent upon't,
Must full as much some other way discount.
The Hebrew, Chaldee, and the Syriac,
Do, like their letters, set men's reason back,
And turn their wits that strive to understand it
(Like those that write the characters) left-handed.
Yet he that is but able to express
No sense at all in several languages,
Will pass for learneder than he that's known
To speak the strongest reason in his own."
Butler.

The description of persons who have the fewest ideas of all others are mere authors and readers. It is better to be able neither to read nor write than to be able to do nothing else. A lounger who is ordinarily seen with a book in his hand is (we may be almost sure) equally without the power or inclination to attend either to what passes around him or in his own mind. Such a one may be said to carry his understanding about with him in his pocket, or to leave it at home on his library shelves. He is afraid of venturing on any train of reasoning, or of striking out any observation that is not mechanically suggested to him by passing his eyes over certain legible characters; shrinks from the fatigue of thought, which, for want of practice, becomes insupportable to him; and sits down contented with an endless, wearisome succession of words and half-formed images, which fill the void of the mind, and continually efface one another. Learning is, in too many cases, but a foil to

common sense; a substitute for true knowledge. Books are less often made use of as "spectacles" to look at nature with, than as blinds to keep out its strong light and shifting scenery from weak eyes and indolent dispositions. The book-worm wraps himself up in his web of verbal generalities, and sees only the glimmering shadows of things reflected from the minds of others Nature puts him out. The impressions of real objects, stripped of the disguises of words and voluminous roundabout descriptions, are blows that stagger him; their variety distracts, their rapidity exhausts him; and he turns from the bustle, the noise, and glare, and whirling motion of the world about him (which he has not an eye to follow in his fantastic changes, nor an understanding to reduce to fixed principles), to the quite monotony of the dead languages, and the less startling and more intelligible combinations of the letters of the alphabet. It is well, it is perfectly well. "Leave me to my repose," is the motto of the sleeping and dead. You might as well ask the paralytic to leap from his chair and throw away his crutch, or, without a miracle, to "take up his bed and walk," as expect the learned reader to thrown down his book and think for himself. He clings to it for his intellectual support; and his dread of being left to himself is like the horror of a vacuum. He can only breathe a learned atmosphere, as other men breath common air. He is a borrower of sense. He has no ideas of his own, and must live on those of other people. The habit of supplying our ideas from foreign sources "enfeebles all internal strength of thought," as a course of dram drinking destroys the tone of the stomach. The faculties of the mind, when not exerted, or when cramped by custom and authority, become listless, torpid, and unfit for the purposes of thought or action. Can we wonder at the languor and lassitude which is thus produced by a life of learned sloth and ignorance; by poring over lines and syllables that excite little more idea or interest than if they were the characters of an unknown tongue, till the eye closes on vacancy, and the book drops from the feeble hand! I would rather be a wood-cutter, or the meanest hind, that all day "sweats in the eye of Phoebus, and at night sleeps in Elysium," than wear out my life so, 'twixt dreaming and awake. The learned author differs from the learned student in this,

that the one transcribes what the other reads. The learned are mere literary drudges. If you set them upon original compositions their heads turn, they don't know where they are. The indefatigable readers of books are like the everlasting copiers of pictures, who, when they attempt to do anything of their own, find they want an eye quick enough, and hand steady enough, and colours bright enough, to trace the living forms of nature.

Any one who has passed through the regular gradations of a classical education, and is not made a fool by it, may consider himself as having had a very narrow escape. It is an old remark, that boys who shine at school do not make the greatest figure when they grow up and come out into the world. The things, in fact, which a boy is set to learn at school, and on which his success depends, are things which do not require the exercise either of the highest or the most useful faculties of the mind. Memory (and that of the lowest kind) is the chief faculty called into play in conning over and repeating lessons by rote in grammar, in languages, in geography, arithmetic, etc., so that he who has the most of this technical memory, with the least turn for other things, which have a stronger and more natural claim upon his childish attention, will make the most forward school-boy. The jargon containing the definitions of the parts of speech, the rules for casting up an account, or the inflections of a Greek verb, can have no attraction to the tyro of ten years old, except as they are imposed as a task upon him by others, of from his feeling the want of sufficient relish or amusement in other things. A lad with a sickly constitution and no very active mind, who can just retain what is pointed out to him, and has neither sagacity to distinguish, nor spirit to enjoy for himself, will generally be at the head of his form. An idler at school, on the other hand, is one who has high health and spirits, who has the free use of his limbs, with all his wits about him, who feels the circulation of his blood and the motion of his heart, who is ready to laugh and cry in a breath, and who had rather chase a ball or a butterfly, feel the open air in his face, look at the fields or the sky, follow a winding path, or enter with eagerness into all the little conflicts and interests of his acquaintances and friends, than doze over a

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musty spelling-book, repeat barbarous distichs, after his master, sit so many hours pinioned to a writing-desk, and receive his reward for the loss of time and pleasure in paltry prize-medals at Christmas and Midsummer. There is indeed a degree of stupidity which prevents children from learning the usual lessons, or ever arriving at these puny academic honours. But what passes for stupidity is much oftener a want of interest, of a sufficient motive to fix the attention and force a reluctant application of the dry and unmeaning pursuits of school learning. The best capacities are as much above this drudgery as the dullest are beneath it. Our men of the greatest genius have not been most distinguished for their acquirements at school or at the university.

"Th' enthusiast Fancy was a truant ever."

Gray and Collins were among the instances of this wayward disposition. Such persons do not think so highly of the advantages, nor can they submit their imaginations so servilely to the trammels of strict scholastic discipline. There is a certain kind and degree of intellect in which words take root, but into which things have not power to penetrate. A mediocrity of talent, with a certain slenderness of moral constitution, is the soil that produces the most brilliant specimens of successful prize-essays and Greek epigrammatists. It should not be forgotten that the least respectable character among modern politicians was the cleverest boy at Eton.

Learning is the knowledge of that which is not generally known to others, and which we can only derive at second-hand from books or other artificial sources. The knowledge of that which is before us, or about us, which appeals to our experience, passions, and pursuits, to the bosom and businesses of men, is not learning. Learning is the knowledge of that which none but the learned know. He is the most learned man who knows the most of what is farthest removed from common life and actual observation, that is of the least practical utility, and least liable to be brought to the test of experience, and that, having been handed down through the greatest

number of intermediate stages, is the most full of uncertainty, difficulties and contradictions. It is seeing with the eyes of others, hearing with their ears, and pinning our faith on their understandings. The learned man prides himself in the knowledge of names and dates, not of men or things. He thinks and cares nothing about his next-door neighbours, but is deeply read in the tribes and castes of the Hindoos and Calmuc Tartars. He can hardly find his way into the next street, though he is acquainted with the exact dimensions of Constantinople and Pekin. He does not know whether his oldest acquaintance is a knave or a fool, but he can pronounce a pompous lecture on all the principal characters in history. He cannot tell whether an object is black or white, round or square, and yet he is a professed master of the laws of optics and rules of perspective. He knows as much of what he talks about as a blind man does of colours. He cannot give a satisfactory answer to the plainest question, nor is he ever in the right in any one of his opinions upon any one matter of fact that really comes before him, and yet he gives himself out for an infallible judge on all those points, of which it is impossible that he or any other person living should know anything but by conjecture. He is expert in all the dead and in most of the living languages; but he can neither speak his own fluently, nor write it correctly. A person of this class, the second Greek scholar of his day, undertook to point out several solecisms in Milton's Latin style; and in all is own performance there is hardly a sentence of common English. Such was Dr. _______. Such is Dr. _______. Such was not Porson. He was an exception that confirmed the general rule, — a man that, by uniting talent and knowledge with learning, made the distinction between them more striking and palpable.

A mere scholar, who knows nothing but books, must be ignorant even of them. "Books do not teach the use of books." How should he know anything of a work who knows nothing of the subject of it? The learned pedant is conversant with books only as they are made of other books, and those again of others, without end. He parrots those who have parroted others. He can translate the same word into ten different languages, but he knows nothing of the thing which it means in any one of

them. He stuffs his head with authorities built on authorities, with quotations quoted from quotations, while he locks up his senses, his understanding, and his heart. He is unacquainted with the maxims and manners of the world; he is to seek in the characters of individuals. He sees no beauty in the face of nature or of art. To him "the mighty world of eye and ear" is hid; and "knowledge," except at one entrance, "quite shut out." His pride takes part with his ignorance, and his self-importance rises with the number of things of which he does not know the value, and which he therefore despises as unworthy of his notice. He knows nothing of pictures, – "of the colouring of Titian, the grace of Raphael, the purity of Domenichino, the corregioscity of Correggio, the learning of Poussin, the airs of Guido, the taste of the Caracci, or the grand contour of Micheal Angelo,"--of all those glories of the Italian and miracles of the Flemish school, which have filled the eyes of mankind with delight, and to the study and imitation of which thousands have in vain devoted their lives. These are to him as if they had never been, a mere dead letter, a by-word; and no wonder, for he neither sees nor understands their prototypes in nature. A print of Rubins' Watering place, or Claude's Enchanted Castle, may be hanging on the walls of his rooms for months without his once perceiving them; and if you point them out to him he will turn away from them. The language of nature, or of art (which is another nature), is one that he does not understand. He repeats indeed the names of Apelles and Phidias, because they are to be found in classic authors, and boasts of their works as prodigies, because they no longer exist; or when he sees the finest remains of Grecian art actually before him in the Elgin Marbles, takes no other interest in them than as they lead to a learned dispute, and (which is the same thing) a quarrel about the meaning of a Greek particle. He is equally ignorant of music; he "knows no touch of it," from the strains of the all-accomplished Mozart to the Shepherd's pipe upon the mountain. His ears are nailed to his books; and deadened with the sound of the Greek and Latin tongues, and the din and smithery of school-learning. Does he know anything more of poetry? He knows the number of feet in a verse, and of acts in a play; but of the soul or spirit he knows nothing. He can turn a

Greek ode into English, or a Latin epigram into Greek verse; but whether either is worth the trouble he leaves to the critics. Does he understand "the act and practique part of life" better than the theorique"? No. He knows no liberal or mechanic art, no trade or occupation, no game of skill or chance. Learning "has no skill in surgery," in agriculture, in building, or in working in wood or in iron; it cannot make any instrument of labour, or use it when made; it cannot handle the plough or the spade, or the chisel or the hammer; it knows nothing of hunting or hawking, fishing or shooting, of horses or dogs, of fencing or dancing, or cudgel-playing, or bowls or cards, or tennis, or anything else. The learned professor of all arts and sciences cannot reduce any one of them to practice, though he may contribute an account of them to an Encyclopedia. He has not the use of his hands or of his feet; he can neither run, nor walk, nor swim; and he considers all those who actually understand and can exercise any of these arts of body or mind as vulgar and mechanical men, – though to know almost any one of them in perfection requires long time and practice, with powers originally fitted, and a turn of mind particularly devoted to them. It does not require more than this to enable the learned candidate to arrive, by painful study, at a doctor's degree and a fellowship, and to eat, drink and sleep the rest of his life!

The thing is plain. All that men really understand is confined to a very small compass; to their daily affairs and experience; to what they have an opportunity to know and motives to study or practise. The rest is affectation and imposture. The common people have the use of their limbs; for the live by their labour or skill. They understand their own business and the characters of those they have to deal with; for it is necessary that they should . They have eloquence to express their passions, and wit at will to express their contempt and provoke laughter. Their natural use of speech is not hung up in monumental mockery, in an obsolete language; nor is there sense of what is ludicrous, or readiness at finding out allusions to express it, buried in collections of *Anas*. You will hear more good things on the outside of a stage-coach from London to Oxford than if you were to pass a twelvemonth with the

undergraduates, or heads of colleges, of that famous university; and more home truths are to be learnt from listening to a noisy debate in a an ale house than from attending to a formal one in the House of Commons. An elderly country gentlewoman will often know more of character, and be able to illustrate it by more amusing anecdotes taken from the history of what has been said, done, and gossiped in a country town for the last fifty years, than the best blue-stocking of the age will be able to glean from that sort of learning which consists in an acquaintance with all the novels and satirical poems published in the same period. People in towns, indeed are woefully deficient in a knowledge of character ,which they see only in the bust, not as a whole-length. People in the country not only know all that has happened to a man, but trace his virtues or vices, as they do his features, in their descent through several generations, and solve some contradiction in his behavior by a cross in the breed half a century ago. The learned know nothing of the matter, either in town or country. Above all, the mass of society have common sense, which the learned in all ages want. The vulgar are in the right when they judge for themselves; they are wrong when they trust to their blind guides. The celebrated nonconformist divine, Baxter, was almost stoned to death by the good women of Kidderminster, for asserting from the pulpit that “hell was paved with infants' skulls”; but, by the force of argument, and of learned quotations from the Fathers, the reverend preacher at length prevailed over the scruples of his congregation, and over reason and humanity.

Such is the use which has been made of human learning. The labourers in this vineyard seem as if it was their object to confound all common sense, and the distinctions of good and evil, by means of traditional maxims and preconceived notions taken upon trust, and increasing in absurdity with increase of age. They pile hypotheses on hypotheses, mountain high, till it is impossible to come to the plain truth on any question. They see things, not as they are, but as they find them in books, and “wink and shut their apprehension up,” in order that they may discover nothing to interfere with their prejudices or convince them of their absurdity. It

might be supposed that the height of human wisdom consisted in maintaining contradictions and rendering nonsense sacred. There is no dogma, however fierce or foolish, to which these persons have not set their seals, and tried to impose on the understandings of their followers, as the will of Heaven, clothed with all the terrors and sanctions of religion. How little has the human understanding been directed to find out the true and useful! How much ingenuity has been thrown away in defence of creeds and systems! How much time and talents have been wasted in theological controversy, in law, in politics, in verbal criticism, in judicial astrology and in finding out the art of making gold! What actual benefit do we reap form the writings of a Laud or Whitgift, or of Bishop Bull or Bishop Waterland, or Prideaux' Connections or Beausobre, or Calmet, or St Augustine, or Puffendorf, or Vattel, or from the more literal but equally learned and unprofitable labours of Scaliger, Cardan, and Scioppius? How many grains of sense are there in their thousand folio or quarto volumes? What would the world lose if they were committed to the flames to-morrow? Or are they not already "gone to the vault of all the Capulets"? Yet all these were oracles in their time, and would have scoffed at you or me, at common sense and human nature, for differing with them. It is our turn to laugh now.

To conclude this subject. The most sensible people to be met with in society are men of business and of the world, who argue from what they see and know, instead of spinning cobweb distinctions of what things ought to be. Women have often more of what is called good sense then men. They have fewer pretensions; are less implicated in theories; and judge of objects more from their immediate and involuntary impression on the mind, and, therefore, more truly and naturally. They cannot reason wrong; for they do not reason at all. They do not think or speak by rule; and they have in general more eloquence and wit, as well as sense, on that account. By their wit, sense and eloquence together, they generally contrive to govern their husbands. Their style, when they write to their friends (not for the booksellers), is better than that of most authors. – Uneducated people have most exuberance of invention and the greatest freedom from prejudice. Shakespear's was

evidently an uneducated mind, both in the freshness of his imagination and the variety of his views; as Milton's was scholastic, in the texture both of his thoughts and feelings. Shakespear had not been accustomed to write themes at school in favour of virtue or against vice. To this we owe the unaffected but healthy tone of his dramatic morality. If we wish to know the force of human genius we should read Shakespear. If we wish to see the insignificance of human learning we may only study his commentators.

1809. Leigh **HUNT**. (1784-1859)

Getting Up on Cold Mornings. written 1823.

An Italian author – Giulio Cordara, a Jesuit – has written a poem upon insects, which he begins by insisting, that those troublesome and abominable little animals were created for our annoyance, and that they were certainly not inhabitants of Paradise. We of the north may dispute this piece of theology; but on the other hand, it is as clear as the snow on the housetops, that Adam was not under the necessity of shaving; and that when Eve walked out of her delicious bower, she did not step upon ice three inches thick.

Some people say it is a very easy thing to get up of a cold morning. You have only, they tell you, to take the resolution; and the thing is done. This may be very true; just as a boy at school has only to take a flogging, and the thing is over. But we have not at all made up our minds upon it; and we find it a very pleasant exercise to discuss the matter, candidly, before we get up. This, at least, is not idling, though it may be lying. It affords an excellent answer to those who ask how lying in bed can be indulged in by a reasoning being, – a rational creature. How? Why, with the argument calmly at work in one's head, and the clothes over one's shoulder. Oh – it is a fine way of spending a sensible, impartial half-hour.

If these people would be more charitable they would get on with their argument better. But they are apt to reason so ill, and to assert so dogmatically, that one could wish to have them stand round one's bed of a bitter morning, and lie before their faces. They ought to hear both sides of the bed, the inside and out. If they cannot entertain themselves with their own thoughts for half an hour or so, it is not the fault of those who can. If their will is never pulled aside by the enticing arms of imagination, so much the luckier for the stage-coachman.

Candid inquiries into one's decumbency, besides the greater or less privileges to be allowed a man in proportion to his ability of keeping early hours, the work given his faculties, etc., will at least concede their due merits to such representations as the following. In the first place, says the injured but calm appealer, I have been warm all night, and find my system in a state perfectly suitable to a warm-blooded animal. To get out of this state into the cold, besides the inharmonious and uncritical abruptness of the transition, is so unnatural to such a creature, that the poets, refining upon the tortures of the damned, make one of their greatest agonies consist in being suddenly transported from heat to cold, – from fire to ice. They are "haled" out of their "beds," says Milton, by "harpy-footed furies," – fellows who come to call them. On my first movement towards the anticipation of getting up, I find that such parts of the sheets and bolster, as are exposed to the air of the room, are stone-cold. On opening my eyes, the first thing that meets them is my own breath rolling forth, as if in the open air, like smoke out of a cottage chimney. Think of this symptom. Then I turn my eyes sideways and see the window all frozen over. Think of that. Then the servant comes in. "It is very cold this morning, is it not!" – "Very cold, Sir." – "Very cold indeed, isn't it!" – "Very cold indeed, Sir." – "More than usually so, isn't it, even for this weather?" (Here the servant's wit and good-nature are put to a considerable test, and the inquirer lies on thorns for the answer.) "Why, Sir I think it it." (Good creature! There is not a better, or more truth-telling servant going.) "I must rise, however – get me some warm water." – Here comes a fine interval between the departure of the servant and the arrival of the hot water; during which, of course, it is of "no use!" to get up. The hot water comes. "Is it quite hot?" – "Yes, Sir." – "Perhaps too hot for shaving: I must wait a little?" – "No Sir; it will just do." (There is an over-nice propriety sometimes, an officious zeal of virtue, a little troublesome.) "Oh – the shirt – you must air my clean shirt; – linen gets very damp this weather." – "Yes, Sir." Here another delicious five minutes. A knock at the door. „Oh, the shirt – very well. My stockings – I think the stockings had better be aired too." – "Very well, Sir." – Here another interval. At length everything is ready,

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except myself. I now, continues our incumbent (a happy word, by the bye, for a country vicar) – I now cannot help thinking a good deal – who can? – upon the unnecessary and villainous custom of shaving: it is a thing so unmanly (here I nestle closer) – so effeminate (here I recoil from an unlucky step into the colder part of the bed). – No wonder that the Queen of France took part with the rebels against the degenerate King, her husband, who first affronted her smooth visage with a face like her own.

The Emperor Julian never showed the luxuriancy of his genius to better advantage than in reviving the flowing beard. Look at Cardinal Bembo's picture – at Michael Angelo's – at Titian's – at Shakspeare's – at Fletcher's – at Spenser's – at Chaucer's – at Alfred's – at Plato's – I could name a great man for every tick of my watch. – Look at the Turks, a grave and otiose people. – Think of Haroun Al Raschid and Bed-ridden Hassan. – Think of Wortley Montague, the worthy son of his mother, above the prejudice of his time – Look at the Persian gentlemen, whom one is ashamed of meeting about the suburbs, their dress and appearance are so much finer than our own – Lastly, think of the razor itself – how totally opposed to every sensation of bed – how cold, how edgy, how hard! how utterly different from anything like the warm and circling amplitude, which

Sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

Add to this, benumbed fingers, which may help you to cut yourself, a quivering body, a frozen towel, and a ewer full of ice; and he that says there is nothing to oppose in all this, only shows, at any rate, that he has no merit in opposing it.

Thomson the poet, who exclaims in his Seasons –

Falsely luxurious! Will not man awake?

used to lie in bed till noon, because he said he had no motive in getting up. He could imagine the good of rising; but then he could also imagine the good of lying still; and his exclamation, it must be allowed, was made upon summertime, not winter. We must proportion the argument to the individual character. A money-getter may be drawn out of his bed by three or four pence; but this will not suffice for a student. A proud man may say, "What shall I think of myself, if I don't get up?" but the more humble one will be content to waive his prodigious notion of himself, out of respect to his kindly bed. The mechanical man shall get, up without any ado at all; and so shall the barometer. An ingenious lier in bed will find hard matter of discussion even on the score of health and longevity. He will ask us for our proofs and precedents of the ill effects of lying later in cold weather; and sophisticate much on the advantages of an even temperature of body; of the natural propensity (pretty universal) to have one's way; and of the animals that roll themselves up, and sleep all the winter. As to longevity, he will ask whether the longest is of necessity the best; and whether Holborn is the handsomest street in London.

We only know of one confounding, not to say confounded argument, fit to overturn the huge luxury, the "enormous bliss" – of the vice in question. A lier in bed may be allowed to profess a disinterested indifference for his health or longevity; but while he is showing the reasonableness of consulting his own or one person's comfort, he must admit the proportionate claim of more than one; and the best way to deal with him is this, especially for a lady; for we earnestly recommend the use of that sex on such occasions, if not somewhat *over*-persuasive; since extremes have an awkward knack of meeting. First then, admit all the ingeniousness of what he says, telling him that the bar has been deprived of an excellent lawyer. Then look at him in the most good-natured manner in the world, with a mixture of assent and appeal in your countenance, and tell him that you are waiting breakfast for him; that you never like to breakfast without him; that you really want it too; that the servants want theirs; that you shall not know how to get the house into order,

unless he rises; and that you are sure he would do things twenty times worse, even than getting out of his warm bed, to put them all into good humour and a state of comfort. Then, after having said this, throw in the comparatively indifferent matter, to *him*, about his health; but tell him that it is no indifferent matter to you; that the sight of his illness makes more people suffer than one; but that if, nevertheless, he really does feel so very sleepy and so very refreshed by – Yet stay; we hardly know whether the frailty of a – Yes, yes; say that too, especially if you say it with sincerity; for if the weakness of human nature on the one hand and the *vis inertiae* on the other, should lead him to take advantage of it once or twice, good-humour and sincerity form an irresistible junction at last; and are still better and warmer things than pillows and blankets.

Other little helps of appeal may be thrown in, as occasion requires. You may tell a lover, for instance, that lying in bed makes people corpulent; a father, that you wish him to complete the fine manly example he sets his children; a lady, that she will injure her bloom or her shape, which M. or W. admires so much; and a student or artist, that he is always so glad to have done a good day's work, in his best manner.

Reader. And pray, Mr. Indicator, how do *you* behave yourself in this respect?

Indic. Oh, Madam, perfectly, of course; like all advisers.

Reader. Nay, I allow that your mode of argument does not look quite so suspicious as the old way of sermonizing and severity, but I have my doubts, especially from that laugh of yours. If I should look in tomorrow morning –

Indic. Ah, Madam, the look in of a face like yours does anything with me. It shall fetch me up at nine, if you please – *six*, I meant to say.

1810. Thomas **De QUINCEY**. (1785-1859)

On the Knocking at the Gate in *Macbeth*. written 1823.

[Translated by Adrian Nicolescu in the book *Shakespeare şi opera lui* (culegere de texte critice), Editura pentru Literatură Universală, Bucureşti 1964, pp. 74-78.]

From my boyish days I had always felt a great perplexity on one point in Macbeth. It was this: the knocking at the gate, which succeeds to the murder of Duncan, produced to my feelings an effect for which I never could account. The effect was, that it reflected back upon the murderer a peculiar awfulness and a depth of solemnity; yet, however obstinately I endeavoured with my understanding to comprehend this, for many years I never could see why it should produce such an effect.

Here I pause for one moment, to exhort the reader never to pay any attention to his understanding, when it stands in opposition to any other faculty of his mind. The mere understanding, however useful and indispensable, is the meanest faculty in the human mind, and the most to be distrusted; and yet the great majority of people trust to nothing else, which may do for ordinary life, but not for philosophical purposes. Of this out of ten thousand instances that I might produce, I will cite one. Ask of any person whatsoever, who is not previously prepared for the demand by a knowledge of the perspective, to draw in the rudest way the commonest appearance which depends upon the laws of that science; as, for instance, to represent the effect of two walls standing at right angles to each other, or the appearance of the houses on each side of a street, as seen by a person looking down the street from one extremity. Now in all cases, unless the person has happened to observe in pictures how it is that artists produce these effects, he will be utterly unable to make the smallest approximation to it. Yet why? For he has actually

seen the effect every day of his life. The reason is – that he allows his understanding to overrule his eyes. His understanding, which includes no intuitive knowledge of the laws of vision, can furnish him with no reason why a line which is known and can be proved to be a horizontal line, should not appear a horizontal line; a line that made any angle with the perpendicular, less than a right angle, would seem to him to indicate that his houses were all tumbling down together. Accordingly, he makes the line of his houses a horizontal line, and fails, of course, to produce the effect demanded. Here, then, is one instance out of many, in which not only the understanding is allowed to overrule the eyes, but where the understanding is positively allowed to obliterate the eyes, as it were; for not only does the man believe the evidence of his understanding in opposition to that of his eyes, but (what is monstrous!) the idiot is not aware that his eyes ever gave such evidence. He does not know that he has seen (and therefore quoad his consciousness has not seen) that which he has seen every day of his life. But to return from this digression, my understanding could furnish no reason why the knocking at the gate in Macbeth should produce any effect, direct or reflected. In fact, my understanding said positively that it could not produce any effect. But I knew better; I felt that it did; and I waited and clung to the problem until further knowledge should enable me to solve it. At length, in 1812, Mr. Williams made his debut on the stage of Ratcliffe Highway, and executed those unparalleled murders which have procured for him such a brilliant and undying reputation. On which murders, by the way, I must observe, that in one respect they have had an ill effect, by making the connoisseur in murder very fastidious in his taste, and dissatisfied by anything that has been since done in that line. All other murders look pale by the deep crimson of his; and, as an amateur once said to me in a querulous tone, "There has been absolutely nothing doing since his time, or nothing that"s worth speaking of." But this is wrong; for it is unreasonable to expect all men to be great artists, and born with the genius of Mr. Williams. Now it will be remembered, that in the first of these murders (that of the Marrs), the same incident (of a knocking at the door) soon after the work of

extermination was complete, did actually occur, which the genius of Shakespeare has invented; and all good judges, and the most eminent dilettanti, acknowledged the felicity of Shakespeare"s suggestion, as soon as it was actually realized. Here, then, was a fresh proof that I was right in relying on my own feeling, in opposition to my understanding; and I again set myself to study the problem; at length I solved it to my own satisfaction, and my solution is this. Murder, in ordinary cases, where the sympathy is wholly directed to the case of the murdered person, is an incident of coarse and vulgar horror; and for this reason, that it flings the interest exclusively upon the natural but ignoble instinct by which we cleave to life; an instinct which, as being indispensable to the primal law of self-preservation, is the same in kind (though different in degree) amongst all living creatures: this instinct, therefore, because it annihilates all distinctions, and degrades the greatest of men to the level of "the poor beetle that we tread on", exhibits human nature in its most abject and humiliating attitude. Such an attitude would little suit the purposes of the poet. What then must he do? He must throw the interest on the murderer. Our sympathy must be with him (of course I mean a sympathy of comprehension, a sympathy by which we enter into his feelings, and are made to understand them, –not a sympathy of pity or approbation [1]. In the murdered person, all strife of thought, all flux and reflux of passion and of purpose, are crushed by one overwhelming panic; the fear of instant death smites him "with its petrific mace". But in the murderer, such a murderer as a poet will condescend to, there must be raging some great storm of passion – jealousy, ambition, vengeance, hatred – which will create a hell within him; and into this hell we are to look.

In Macbeth, for the sake of gratifying his own enormous and teeming faculty of creation, Shakspere has introduced two murderers: and, as usual in his hands, they are remarkably discriminated: but, though in Macbeth the strife of mind is greater than in his wife, the tiger spirit not so awake, and his feelings caught chiefly by contagion from her, yet, as both were finally involved in the guilt of murder, the murderous mind of necessity is finally to be presumed in both. This was

to be expressed; and on its own account, as well as to make it a more proportionable antagonist to the unoffending nature of their victim, "the gracious Duncan," and adequately to expound "the deep damnation of his taking off", this was to be expressed with peculiar energy. We were to be made to feel that the human nature, i.e. the divine nature of love and mercy, spread through the hearts of all creatures, and seldom utterly withdrawn from man – was gone, vanished, extinct, and that the fiendish nature had taken its place. And, as this effect is marvellously accomplished in the dialogues and soliloquies themselves, so it is finally consummated by the expedient under consideration; and it is to this that I now solicit the reader"s attention. If the reader has ever witnessed a wife, daughter, or sister in a fainting fit, he may chance to have observed that the most affecting moment in such a spectacle is that in which a sigh and a stirring announce the recommencement of suspended life. Or, if the reader has ever been present in a vast metropolis, on the day when some great national idol was carried in funeral pomp to his grave, and chancing to walk near the course through which it passed, has felt powerfully in the silence and desertion of the streets, and in the stagnation of ordinary business, the deep interest which at that moment was possessing the heart of man – if all at once he should hear the death-like stillness broken up by the sound of wheels rattling away from the scene, and making known that the transitory vision was dissolved, he will be aware that at no moment was his sense of the complete suspension and pause in ordinary human concerns so full and affecting, as at that moment when the suspension ceases, and the goings-on of human life are suddenly resumed. All action in any direction is best expounded, measured, and made apprehensible, by reaction. Now apply this to the case in Macbeth. Here, as I have said, the retiring of the human heart, and the entrance of the fiendish heart was to be expressed and made sensible. Another world has stept in; and the murderers are taken out of the region of human things, human purposes, human desires. They are transfigured: Lady Macbeth is "unsexed;" Macbeth has forgot that he was born of woman; both are conformed to the image of devils; and the world of devils is suddenly revealed. But how shall this be conveyed

and made palpable? In order that a new world may step in, this world must for a time disappear. The murderers, and the murder must be insulated – cut off by an immeasurable gulf from the ordinary tide and succession of human affairs – locked up and sequestered in some deep recess; we must be made sensible that the world of ordinary life is suddenly arrested – laid asleep – tranced – racked into a dread armistice; time must be annihilated; relation to things without abolished; and all must pass self-withdrawn into a deep syncope and suspension of earthly passion. Hence it is, that when the deed is done, when the work of darkness is perfect, then the world of darkness passes away like a pageantry in the clouds: the knocking at the gate is heard; and it makes known audibly that the reaction has commenced; the human has made its reflux upon the fiendish; the pulses of life are beginning to beat again; and the re-establishment of the goings-on of the world in which we live, first makes us profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis that had suspended them.

O mighty poet! Thy works are not as those of other men, simply and merely great works of art; but are also like the phenomena of nature, like the sun and the sea, the stars and the flowers; like frost and snow, rain and dew, hail-storm and thunder, which are to be studied with entire submission of our own faculties, and in the perfect faith that in them there can be no too much or too little, nothing useless or inert – but that, the farther we press in our discoveries, the more we shall see proofs of design and self-supporting arrangement where the careless eye had seen nothing but accident!

Note.

1. It seems almost ludicrous to guard and explain my use of a word, in a situation where it would naturally explain itself. But it has become necessary to do so, in consequence of the unscholarlike use of the word sympathy, at present so general, by which, instead of taking it in its proper sense, as the act of reproducing in our minds the feelings of another, whether for hatred, indignation, love, pity, or approbation, it is made a mere synonyme of the word pity; and hence, instead of saying "sympathy with another", many writers adopt the monstrous barbarism of "sympathy for another".

1828. Ralph Waldo **EMERSON**. (1803–1882)

Shakespeare; or The Poet. written 1904.

Great men are more distinguished by range and tent than by originality. If we require the originality which consists in weaving, like a spider, their web from their own bowels; in finding clay and making bricks and building the house; no great men are original. Nor does valuable originality consist in unlikeness to other men. The hero is in the press of knights and the thick of events; and seeing what men want and sharing their desire, he adds the needful length of sight and of arm, to come at the desired point. The greatest genius is the most indebted man. A poet is no rattle-brain, saying what comes uppermost, and, because he says every thing, saying at last something good; but a heart in unison with his time and country. There is nothing whimsical and fantastic in his production, but sweet and sad earnest, freighted with the weightiest convictions and pointed with the most determined aim which any man or class knows of in his times.

The Genius of our life is jealous of individuals, and will not have any individual great, except through the general. There is no choice to genius. A great man does not wake up on some fine morning and say, „I am full of life, I will go to sea and find an Antarctic continent: to-day I will square the circle: I will ransack botany and find a new food for man: I have a new architecture in my mind: I foresee a new mechanic power": no, but he finds himself in the river of the thoughts and events, forced onward by the ideas and necessities of his contemporaries. He stands where all the eyes of men look one way, and their hands all point in the direction in which he should go. The Church has reared him amidst rites and pomps, and he carries out the advice which her music gave him, and builds a cathedral needed by her chants and processions. He finds a war raging: it educates him, by trumpet, in

barracks, and he betters the instruction. He finds two counties groping to bring coal, or flour, or fish, from the place of production to the place of consumption, and he hits on a railroad. Every master has found his materials collected, and his power lay in his sympathy with his people and in his love of the materials he wrought in. What an economy of power! and what a compensation for the shortness of life! All is done to his hand. The world has brought him thus far on his way. The human race has gone out before him, sunk the hills, filled the hollows and bridged the rivers. Men, nations, poets, artisans, women, all have worked for him, and he enters into their labours. Choose any other thing, out of the line of tendency, out of the national feeling and history, and he would have all to do for himself: his powers would be expended in the first preparations. Great genial power, one would almost say, consists in not being original at all; in being altogether receptive; in letting the world do all, and suffering the spirit of the hour to pass unobstructed through the mind.

Shakespeare's youth fell in a time when the English people were importunate for dramatic entertainments. The court took offence easily at political allusions and attempted to suppress them. The Puritans, a growing and energetic party, and the religious among the Anglican church, would suppress them. But the people wanted them. Inn-yards, houses without roofs, and extemporaneous enclosures at country fairs were the ready theatres of strolling players. The people had tasted this new joy; and, as we could not hope to suppress newspapers now, – no, not by the strongest party, – neither then could king, prelate, or puritan, alone or united, suppress an organ which was ballad, epic, newspaper, caucus, lecture, Punch and library, at the same time. Probably king, prelate and puritan, all found their own account in it. It had become, by all causes, a national interest, – by no means conspicuous, so that some great scholar would have thought of treating it in an English history, – but not a whit less considerable because it was cheap and of no account, like a baker's-shop. The best proof of its vitality is the crowd of writers which suddenly broke into this field; Kyd, Marlow, Greene, Jonson, Chapman, Dekker, Webster, Heywood, Middleton, Peele, Ford, Massinger, Beaumont and Fletcher.

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The secure possession, by the stage, of the public mind, is of the first importance to the poet who works for it. He loses no time in idle experiments. Here is audience and expectation prepared. In the case of Shakespeare there is much more. At the time when he left Stratford and went up to London, a great body of stage-plays of all dates and writers existed in manuscript and were in turn produced on the boards. Here is the Tale of Troy, which the audience will bear hearing some part of, every week; the Death of Julius Caesar, and other stories out of Plutarch, which they never tire of; a shelf full of English history, from the chronicles of Brut and Arthur, down to the royal Henries, which men hear eagerly; and a string of doleful tragedies, merry Italian tales and Spanish voyages, which all the London 'prentices know. All the mass has been treated, with more or less skill, by every playwright, and the prompter has the soiled and tattered manuscripts. It is now no longer possible to say who wrote them first. They have been the property of the Theatre so long, and so many rising geniuses have enlarged or altered them, inserting a speech or a whole scene, or adding a song, that no man can any longer claim copyright in this work of numbers. Happily, no man wishes to. They are not yet desired in that way. We have few readers, many spectators and hearers. They had best lie where they are.

Shakespeare, in common with his comrades, esteemed the mass of old plays waste stock, in which any experiment could be freely tried. Had the prestige which hedges about a modern tragedy existed, nothing could have been done. The rude warm blood of the living England circulated in the play, as in street-ballads, and gave body which he wanted to his airy and majestic fancy. The poet needs a ground in popular tradition on which he may work, and which, again, may restrain his art within the due temperance. It holds him to the people, supplies a foundation for his edifice, and in furnishing so much work done to his hand, leaves him at leisure and in full strength for the audacities of his imagination. In short, the poet owes to his legend what sculpture owed to the temple. Sculpture in Egypt and in Greece grew up in subordination to architecture. It was the ornament of the temple wall: at first a

rude relief carved on pediments, then the relief became bolder and a head or arm was projected from the wall; the groups being still arranged with reference to the building, which serves also as a frame to hold the figures; and when at last the greatest freedom of style and treatment was reached, the prevailing genius of architecture still enforced a certain calmness and continence in the statue. As soon as the statue was begun for itself, and with no reference to the temple or palace, the art began to decline: freak, extravagance and exhibition took the place of the old temperance. This balance-wheel, which the sculptor found in architecture, the perilous irritability of poetic talent found in the accumulated dramatic materials to which the people were already wonted, and which had a certain excellence which no single genius, however extraordinary, could hope to create.

In point of fact it appears that Shakespeare did owe debts in all directions, and was able to use whatever he found; and the amount of indebtedness may be inferred from Malone's laborious computations in regard to the First, Second and Third parts of Henry VI, in which, "out of 6043 lines, 1771 were written by some author preceding Shakespeare, 2373 by him, on the foundation laid by his predecessors, and 1899 were entirely his own." And the proceeding investigation hardly leaves a single drama of his absolute invention. Malone's sentence is an important piece of external history. In Henry VIII I think I see plainly the cropping out of the original rock on which his own finer stratum was laid. The first play was written by a superior, thoughtful man, with a vicious ear. I can mark his lines, and know well their cadence. See Wolsey's soliloquy, and the following scene with Cromwell, where instead of the metre of Shakespeare, whose secret is that the thought constructs the tune, so that reading for the sense will best bring out the rhythm, – here the lines are constructed on a given tune, and the verse has even a trace of pulpit eloquence. But the play contains through all its length unmistakable traits of Shakespeare's hand, and some passages, as the account of the coronation, are like autographs. What is odd, the compliment to Queen Elizabeth is in the bad rhythm.

Shakespeare knew that tradition supplies a better fable than any invention can. If he lost any credit of design, he augmented his resources; and, at that day, our petulant demand for originality was not so much pressed. There was no literature for the million. The universal reading, the cheap press, were unknown. A great poet who appears in illiterate times, absorbs into his sphere all the light which is any where radiating. Every intellectual jewel, every flower of sentiment it is his fine office to bring to his people; and he comes to value his memory equally with his invention. He is therefore little solicitous whence his thoughts have been derived; whether through translation, whether through tradition, whether by travel in distant countries, whether by inspiration; from whatever source, they are equally welcome to his uncritical audience. Nay, he borrows very near home. Other men say wise things as well as he; only they say a good many foolish things, and do not know when they have spoken wisely. He knows the sparkle of the true stone, and puts it in high place, wherever he finds it. Such is the happy position of Homer perhaps; of Chaucer, of Saadi. They felt that all wit was their wit. And they are librarians and historiographers, as well as poets. Each romancer was heir and dispenser of all the hundred tales of the world, –

"Presenting Thebes' and Pelops' line
And the tale of Troy divine."

The influence of Chaucer is conspicuous in all our early literature; and more recently not only Pope and Dryden have been beholden to him, but, in the whole society of English writers, a large unacknowledged debt is easily traced. One is charmed with the opulence which feeds so many pensioners. But Chaucer is a huge borrower. Chaucer, it seems, drew continually, through Lydgate and Caxton, from Guido di Colonna, whose Latin romance of the Trojan war was in turn a compilation from Dares Phrygius, Ovid and Statius. Then Petrarch, Boccaccio and the Provencal poets are his benefactors: the Romaunt of the Rose is only judicious translation from

William of Lorris and John of Meung: Troilus and Creseide, from Lollius of Urbino: The Cock and the Fox, from the Lais of Marie: The House of Fame, from the French or Italian: and poor Gower he uses as if he were only a brick-kiln or stone-quarry out of which to build his house. He steals by this apology, – that what he takes has no worth where he finds it and the greatest where he leaves it. It has come to be practically a sort of rule in literature, that a man having once shown himself capable of original writing, is entitled thenceforth to steal from the writings of others at discretion. Thought is the property of him who can entertain it and of him who can adequately place it. A certain awkwardness marks the use of borrowed thoughts; but as soon as we have learned what to do with them they become our own.

Thus all originality is relative. Every thinker is retrospective. The learned member of the legislature, at Westminster or at Washington, speaks and votes for thousands. Show us the constituency, and the now invisible channels by which the senator is made aware of their wishes; the crowd of practical and knowing men, who, by correspondence or conversation, are feeding him with evidence, anecdotes and estimates, and it will bereave his fine attitude and resistance of something of their impressiveness. As Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Webster vote, so Locke and Rousseau think, for thousands; and so there were fountains all around Homer, Menu, Saadi, or Milton, from which they drew; friends, lovers, books, traditions, proverbs, – all perished – which, if seen, would go to reduce the wonder. Did the bard speak with authority? Did he feel himself overmatched by any companion? The appeal is to the consciousness of the writer. Is there at last in his breast a Delphi whereof to ask concerning any thought or thing, whether it be verily so, yea or nay? and to have answer, and to rely on that? All the debts which such a man could contract to other wit would never disturb his consciousness of originality; for the ministrations of books and of other minds are a whiff of smoke to that most private reality with which he has conversed.

It is easy to see that what is best written or done by genius in the world, was no man's work, but came by wide social labour, when a thousand wrought like one,

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sharing the same impulse. Our English Bible is a wonderful specimen of the strength and music of the English language. But it was not made by one man, or at one time; but centuries and churches brought it to perfection. There never was a time when there was not some translation existing. The Liturgy, admired for its energy and pathos, is an anthology of the piety of ages and nations, a translation of the prayers and forms of the Catholic church, – these collected, too, in long periods, from the prayers and meditations of every saint and sacred writer all over the world. Grotius makes the like remark in respect to the Lord's Prayer, that the single clauses of which it is composed were already in use in the time of Christ, in the Rabbinical forms. He picked out the grains of gold. The nervous language of the Common Law, the impressive forms of our courts and the precision and substantial truth of the legal distinctions, are the contribution of all the sharp-sighted, strong-minded men who have lived in the countries where these laws govern. The translation of Plutarch gets its excellence by being translation on translation. There never was a time when there was none. All the truly idiomatic and national phrases are kept, and all others successively picked out and thrown away. Something like the same process had gone on, long before, with the originals of these books. The world takes liberties with world-books. Vedas, Aesop's Fables, Pilpay, Arabian Nights, Cid, Iliad, Robin Hood, Scottish Minstrelsy, are not the work of single men. In the composition of such works the time thinks, the market thinks, the mason, the carpenter, the merchant, the farmer, the fop, all think for us. Every book supplies its time with one good word; every municipal law, every trade, every folly of the day; and the generic catholic genius who is not afraid or ashamed to owe his originality to the originality of all, stands with the next age as the recorder and embodiment of his own.

We have to thank the researches of antiquaries, and the Shakespeare Society, for ascertaining the steps of the English drama, from the Mysteries celebrated in churches and by churchmen, and the final detachment from the church, and the completion of secular plays, from Ferrex and Porrex, and Gammer Gurton's Needle, down to the possession of the stage by the very pieces which Shakespeare altered,

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remodelled and finally made his own. Elated with success and piqued by the growing interest of the problem, they have left no book-stall unsearched, no chest in a garret unopened, no file of old yellow accounts to decompose in damp and worms, so keen was the hope to discover whether the boy Shakespeare poached or not, whether he held horses at the theatre door, whether he kept school, and why he left in his will only his second-best bed to Ann Hathaway, his wife.

There is somewhat touching in the madness with which the passing age mischooses the object on which all candles shine and all eyes are turned; the care with which it registers every trifle touching Queen Elizabeth and King James, and the Essexes, Leicesters, Burleighs and Buckinghams; and lets pass without a single valuable note the founder of another dynasty, which alone will cause the Tudor dynasty to be remembered, – the man who carries the Saxon race in him by the inspiration which feeds him, and on whose thoughts the foremost people of the world are now for some ages to be nourished, and minds to receive this and not another bias. A popular player; – nobody suspected he was the poet of the human race; and the secret was kept as faithfully from poets and intellectual men as from courtiers and frivolous people. Bacon, who took the inventory of the human understanding for his times, never mentioned his name. Ben Jonson, though we have strained his few words of regard and panegyric, had no suspicion of the elastic fame whose first vibrations he was attempting. He no doubt thought the praise he has conceded to him generous, and esteemed himself, out of all question, the better poet of the two.

If it need wit to know wit, according to the proverb, Shakespeare's time should be capable of recognizing it. Sir Henry Wotton was born four years after Shakespeare, and died twenty-three years after him; and I find, among his correspondents and acquaintances, the following persons: Theodore Beza, Isaac Casaubon, Sir Philip Sidney, the Earl of Essex, Lord Bacon, Sir Walter Raleigh, John Milton, Sir Henry Vane, Isaac Walton, Dr. Donne, Abraham Cowley, Bellarmine, Charles Cotton, John Pym, John Hales, Kepler, Vieta, Albericus Gentilis, Paul Sarpi,

Arminius; with all of whom exists some token of his having communicated, without enumerating many others whom doubtless he saw, – Shakespeare, Spenser, Jonson, Beaumont, Massinger, the two Herberts, Marlow, Chapman and the rest. Since the constellation of great men who appeared in Greece in the time of Pericles, there was never any such society; – yet their genius failed them to find out the best head in the universe. Our poet's mask was impenetrable. You cannot see the mountain near. It took a century to make it suspected; and not until two centuries had passed, after his death, did any criticism which we think adequate begin to appear. It was not possible to write the history of Shakespeare till now; for he is the father of German literature: it was with the introduction of Shakespeare into German, by Lessing, and the translation of his works by Wieland and Schlegel, that the rapid burst of German literature was most intimately connected. It was not until the nineteenth century, whose speculative genius is a sort of living Hamlet, that the tragedy of Hamlet could find such wondering readers. Now, literature, philosophy and thought are Shakespearized. His mind is the horizon beyond which, at present, we do not see. Our ears are educated to music by his rhythm. Coleridge and Goethe are the only critics who have expressed our convictions with any adequate fidelity: but there is in all cultivated minds a silent appreciation of his superlative power and beauty, which, like Christianity, qualifies the period.

The Shakespeare Society have inquired in all directions, advertised the missing facts, offered money for any information that will lead to proof, – and with what result? Beside some important illustration of the history of the English stage, to which I have adverted, they have gleaned a few facts touching the property, and dealings in regard to property, of the poet. It appears that from year to year he owned a larger share in the Blackfriars' Theatre: its wardrobe and other appurtenances were his: that he bought an estate in his native village with his earnings as writer and shareholder; that he lived in the best house in Stratford; was intrusted by his neighbours with their commissions in London, as of borrowing money, and the like; that he was a veritable farmer. About the time when he was

writing Macbeth, he sues Philip Rogers, in the borough-court of Stratford, for thirty-five shillings, ten pence, for corn delivered to him at different times; and in all respects appears as a good husband, with no reputation for eccentricity or excess. He was a good-natured sort of man, an actor and shareholder in the theatre, not in any striking manner distinguished from other actors and managers. I admit the importance of this information. It was well worth the pains that have been taken to procure it.

But whatever scraps of information concerning his condition these researches may have rescued, they can shed no light upon that infinite invention which is the concealed magnet of his attraction for us. We are very clumsy writers of history. We tell the chronicle of parentage, birth, birth-place, schooling, school-mates, earning of money, marriage, publication of books, celebrity, death; and when we have come to an end of this gossip, no ray of relation appears between it and the goddess-born; and it seems as if, had we dipped at random into the „Modern Plutarch," and read any other life there, it would have fitted the poems as well. It is the essence of poetry to spring, like the rainbow daughter of Wonder, from the invisible, to abolish the past and refuse all history. Malone, Warburton, Dyce and Collier have wasted their oil. The famed theatres, Covent Garden, Drury Lane, the Park and Tremont have vainly assisted. Betterton, Garrick, Kemble, Kean and Macready dedicate their lives to this genius; him they crown, elucidate, obey and express. The genius knows them not. The recitation begins; one golden word leaps out immortal from all this painted pedantry and sweetly torments us with invitations to its own inaccessible homes. I remember I went once to see the Hamlet of a famed performer, the pride of the English stage; and all I then heard and all I now remember of the tragedian was that in which the tragedian had no part; simply Hamlet's question to the ghost: –

"What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon?"

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That imagination which dilates the closet he writes in to the world's dimension, crowds it with agents in rank and order, as quickly reduces the big reality to be the glimpses of the moon. These tricks of his magic spoil for us the illusions of the greenroom. Can any biography shed light on the localities into which the Midsummer Night's Dream admits me? Did Shakespeare confide to any notary or parish recorder, sacristan, or surrogate in Stratford, the genesis of that delicate creation? The forest of Arden, the nimble air of Scone Castle, the moonlight of Portia's villa, "the antres vast and desarts idle" of Othello's captivity, – where is the third cousin, or grand-nephew, the chancellor's file of accounts, or private letter, that has kept one word of those transcendent secrets? In fine, in this drama, as in all great works of art, – in the Cyclopean architecture of Egypt and India, in the Phidian sculpture, the Gothic minsters, the Italian painting, the Ballads of Spain and Scotland, – the Genius draws up the ladder after him, when the creative age goes up to heaven, and gives way to a new age, which sees the works and asks in vain for a history.

Shakespeare is the only biographer of Shakespeare; and even he can tell nothing, except to the Shakespeare in us, that is, to our most apprehensive and sympathetic hour. He cannot step from off his tripod and give us anecdotes of his inspirations. Read the antique documents extricated, analysed and compared by the assiduous Dyce and Collier, and now read one of these skyey sentences, – aerolites, – which seem to have fallen out of heaven, and which not your experience but the man within the breast has accepted as words of fate, and tell me if they match; if the former account in any manner for the latter; or which gives the most historical insight into the man.

Hence, though our external history is so meagre, yet, with Shakespeare for biographer, instead of Aubrey and Rowe, we have really the information which is material; that which describes character and fortune, that which, if we were about to meet the man and deal with him, would most import us to know. We have his

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recorded convictions on those questions which knock for answer at every heart, – on life and death, on love, on wealth and poverty, on the prizes of life and the ways whereby we come at them; on the characters of men, and the influences, occult and open, which affect their fortunes; and on those mysterious and demoniacal powers which defy our science and which yet interweave their malice and their gift in our brightest hours. Who ever read the volume of the Sonnets without finding that the poet had there revealed, under masks that are no masks to the intelligent, the lore of friendship and of love; the confusion of sentiments in the most susceptible, and, at the same time, the most intellectual of men? What trait of his private mind has he hidden in his dramas? One can discern, in his ample pictures of the gentleman and the king, what forms and humanities pleased him; his delight in troops of friends, in large hospitality, in cheerful giving. Let Timon, let Warwick, let Antonio the merchant answer for his great heart. So far from Shakespeare's being the least known, he is the one person, in all modern history, known to us. What point of morals, of manners, of economy, of philosophy, of religion, of taste, of the conduct of life, has he not settled? What mystery has he not signified his knowledge of? What office, or function, or district of man's work, has he not remembered? What king has he not taught state, as Talma taught Napoleon? What maiden has not found him finer than her delicacy? What lover has he not outloved? What sage has he not outseen? What gentleman has he not instructed in the rudeness of his behavior?

Some able and appreciating critics think no criticism on Shakespeare valuable that does not rest purely on the dramatic merit; that he is falsely judged as poet and philosopher. I think as highly as these critics of his dramatic merit, but still think it secondary. He was a full man, who liked to talk; a brain exhaling thoughts and images, which, seeking vent, found the drama next at hand. Had he been less, we should have had to consider how well he filled his place, how good a dramatist he was, – and he is the best in the world. But it turns out that what he has to say is of that weight as to withdraw some attention from the vehicle; and he is like some saint whose history is to be rendered into all languages, into verse and prose, into songs

and pictures, and cut up into proverbs; so that the occasion which gave the saint's meaning the form of a conversation, or of a prayer, or of a code of laws, is immaterial compared with the universality of its application. So it fares with the wise Shakespeare and his book of life. He wrote the airs for all our modern music: he wrote the text of modern life; the text of manners: he drew the man of England and Europe; the father of the man in America; he drew the man, and described the day, and what is done in it: he read the hearts of men and women, their probity, and their second thought and wiles; the wiles of innocence, and the transitions by which virtues and vices slide into their contraries: he could divide the mother's part from the father's part in the face of the child, or draw the fine demarcations of freedom and of fate: he knew the laws of repression which make the police of nature: and all the sweets and all the terrors of human lot lay in his mind as truly but as softly as the landscape lies on the eye. And the importance of this wisdom of life sinks the form, as of Drama or Epic, out of notice. 'Tis like making a question concerning the paper on which a king's message is written.

Shakespeare is as much out of the category of eminent authors, as he is out of the crowd. He is inconceivably wise; the others, conceivably. A good reader can, in a sort, nestle into Plato's brain and think from thence; but not into Shakespeare's. We are still out of doors. For executive faculty, for creation, Shakespeare is unique. No man can imagine it better. He was the farthest reach of subtlety compatible with an individual self, – the subtilest of authors, and only just within the possibility of authorship. With this wisdom of life is the equal endowment of imaginative and of lyric power. He clothed the creatures of his legend with form and sentiments as if they were people who had lived under his roof; and few real men have left such distinct characters as these fictions. And they spoke in language as sweet as it was fit. Yet his talents never seduced him into an ostentation, nor did he harp on one string. An omnipresent humanity co-ordinates all his faculties. Give a man of talents a story to tell, and his partiality will presently appear. He has certain observations, opinions, topics, which have some accidental prominence, and which he disposes all

to exhibit. He crams this part and starves that other part, consulting not the fitness of the thing, but his fitness and strength. But Shakespeare has no peculiarity, no importunate topic; but all is duly given; no veins, no curiosities; no cow-painter, no bird-fancier, no mannerist is he: he has no discoverable egotism: the great he tells greatly; the small subordinately. He is wise without emphasis or assertion; he is strong, as nature is strong, who lifts the land into mountain slopes without effort and by the same rule as she floats a bubble in the air, and likes as well to do the one as the other. This makes that equality of power in farce, tragedy, narrative, and love-songs; a merit so incessant that each reader is incredulous of the perception of other readers.

This power of expression, or of transferring the inmost truth of things into music and verse, makes him the type of the poet and has added a new problem to metaphysics. This is that which throws him into natural history, as a main production of the globe, and as announcing new eras and ameliorations. Things were mirrored in his poetry without loss or blur: he could paint the fine with precision, the great with compass, the tragic and the comic indifferently and without any distortion or favour. He carried his powerful execution into minute details, to a hair point; finishes an eyelash or a dimple as firmly as he draws a mountain; and yet these, like nature's, will bear the scrutiny of the solar microscope.

In short, he is the chief example to prove that more or less of production, more or fewer pictures, is a thing indifferent. He had the power to make one picture. Daguerre learned how to let one flower etch its image on his plate of iodine, and then proceeds at leisure to etch a million. There are always objects; but there was never representation. Here is perfect representation, at last; and now let the world of figures sit for their portraits. No recipe can be given for the making of a Shakespeare; but the possibility of the translation of things into song is demonstrated.

His lyric power lies in the genius of the piece. The sonnets, though their excellence is lost in the splendor of the dramas, are as inimitable as they; and it is not a merit of lines, but a total merit of the piece; like the tone of voice of some

incomparable person, so is this a speech of poetic beings, and any clause as unproducible now as a whole poem.

Though the speeches in the plays, and single lines, have a beauty which tempts the ear to pause on them for their euphuism, yet the sentence is so loaded with meaning and so linked with its foregoers and followers, that the logician is satisfied. His means are as admirable as his ends; every subordinate invention, by which he helps himself to connect some irreconcilable opposites, is a poem too. He is not reduced to dismount and walk because his horses are running off with him in some distant direction: he always rides.

The finest poetry was first experience; but the thought has suffered a transformation since it was an experience. Cultivated men often attain a good degree of skill in writing verses; but it is easy to read, through their poems, their personal history: any one acquainted with the parties can name every figure; this is Andrew and that is Rachel. The sense thus remains prosaic. It is a caterpillar with wings, and not yet a butterfly. In the poet's mind the fact has gone quite over into the new element of thought, and has lost all that is exuvial. This generosity abides with Shakespeare. We say, from the truth and closeness of his pictures, that he knows the lesson by heart. Yet there is not a trace of egotism.

One more royal trait properly belongs to the poet. I mean his cheerfulness, without which no man can be a poet, – for beauty is his aim. He loves virtue, not for its obligation but for its grace: he delights in the world, in man, in woman, for the lovely light that sparkles from them. Beauty, the spirit of joy and hilarity, he sheds over the universe. Epicurus relates that poetry hath such charms that a lover might forsake his mistress to partake of them. And the true bards have been noted for their firm and cheerful temper. Homer lies in sunshine; Chaucer is glad and erect; and Saadi says, "It was rumoured abroad that I was penitent; but what had I to do with repentance?" Not less sovereign and cheerful, – much more sovereign and cheerful, is the tone of Shakespeare. His name suggests joy and emancipation to the heart of men. If he should appear in any company of human souls, who would not march in

his troop? He touches nothing that does not borrow health and longevity from his festal style.

And now, how stands the account of man with this bard and benefactor, when, in solitude, shutting our ears to the reverberations of his fame, we seek to strike the balance? Solitude has austere lessons; it can teach us to spare both heroes and poets; and it weighs Shakespeare also, and finds him to share the halfness and imperfection of humanity.

Shakespeare, Homer, Dante, Chaucer, saw the splendor of meaning that plays over the visible world; knew that a tree had another use than for apples, and corn another than for meal, and the ball of the earth, than for tillage and roads: that these things bore a second and finer harvest to the mind, being emblems of its thoughts, and conveying in all their natural history a certain mute commentary on human life. Shakespeare employed them as colours to compose his picture. He rested in their beauty; and never took the step which seemed inevitable to such genius, namely to explore the virtue which resides in these symbols and imparts this power: – what is that which they themselves say? He converted the elements which waited on his command, into entertainments. He was master of the revels to mankind. Is it not as if one should have, through majestic powers of science, the comets given into his hand, or the planets and their moons, and should draw them from their orbits to glare with the municipal fireworks on a holiday night, and advertise in all towns, "Very superior pyrotechny this evening"? Are the agents of nature, and the power to understand them, worth no more than a street serenade, or the breath of a cigar? One remembers again the trumpet-text in the Koran, – "The heavens and the earth and all that is between them, think ye we have created them in jest?" As long as the question is of talent and mental power, the world of men has not his equal to show. But when the question is, to life and its materials and its auxiliaries, how does he profit me? What does it signify? It is but a Twelfth Night, or Midsummer-Night's Dream, or Winter Evening's Tale: what signifies another picture more or less? The Egyptian verdict of the Shakespeare Societies comes to mind; that he was a jovial

actor and manager. I can not marry this fact to his verse. Other admirable men have led lives in some sort of keeping with their thought; but this man, in wide contrast. Had he been less, had he reached only the common measure of great authors, of Bacon, Milton, Tasso, Cervantes, we might leave the fact in the twilight of human fate: but that this man of men, he who gave to the science of mind a new and larger subject than had ever existed, and planted the standard of humanity some furlongs forward into Chaos, – that he should not be wise for himself; – it must even go into the world's history that the best poet led an obscure and profane life, using his genius for the public amusement.

Well, other men, priest and prophet, Israelite, German and Swede, beheld the same objects: they also saw through them that which was contained. And to what purpose? The beauty straightway vanished; they read commandments, all-excluding mountainous duty; an obligation, a sadness, as of piled mountains, fell on them, and life became ghastly, joyless, a pilgrim's progress, a probation, beleaguered round with doleful histories of Adam's fall and curse behind us; with doomsdays and purgatorial and penal fires before us; and the heart of the seer and the heart of the listener sank in them.

It must be conceded that these are half-views of half-men. The world still wants its poet-priest, a reconciler, who shall not trifle, with Shakespeare the player, nor shall grope in graves, with Swedenborg the mourner; but who shall see, speak, and act, with equal inspiration. For knowledge will brighten the sunshine; right is more beautiful than private affection; and love is compatible with universal wisdom.

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1834. Edgar A. **POE.** (1809-1849)

The Philosophy of Composition. written 1846.

Charles Dickens, in a note now lying before me, alluding to an examination I once made of the mechanism of "Barnaby Rudge," says – "By the way, are you aware that Godwin wrote his 'Caleb Williams' backwards? He first involved his hero in a web of difficulties, forming the second volume, and then, for the first, cast about him for some mode of accounting for what had been done."

I cannot think this the precise mode of procedure on the part of Godwin – and indeed what he himself acknowledges, is not altogether in accordance with Mr. Dickens' idea – but the author of "Caleb Williams" was too good an artist not to perceive the advantage derivable from at least a somewhat similar process. Nothing is more clear than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its denouement before anything be attempted with the pen. It is only with the denouement constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention.

There is a radical error, I think, in the usual mode of constructing a story. Either history affords a thesis – or one is suggested by an incident of the day – or, at best, the author sets himself to work in the combination of striking events to form merely the basis of his narrative –designing, generally, to fill in with description, dialogue, or autorial comment, whatever crevices of fact, or action, may, from page to page, render themselves apparent.

I prefer commencing with the consideration of an effect. Keeping originality always in view – for he is false to himself who ventures to dispense with so obvious

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and so easily attainable a source of interest – I say to myself, in the first place, "Of the innumerable effects, or impressions, of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible, what one shall I, on the present occasion, select?" Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly a vivid effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone – whether by ordinary incidents and peculiar tone, or the converse, or by peculiarity both of incident and tone – afterward looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event, or tone, as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect.

I have often thought how interesting a magazine paper might be written by any author who would – that is to say, who could – detail, step by step, the processes by which any one of his compositions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world, I am much at a loss to say – but, perhaps, the autorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any one other cause. Most writers – poets in especial – prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy – an ecstatic intuition – and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes, at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought – at the true purposes seized only at the last moment – at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view – at the fully – matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable – at the cautious selections and rejections – at the painful erasures and interpolations in a word, at the wheels and pinions – the tackle for scene-shifting – the step-ladders, and demon-traps – the cock's feathers, the red paint and the black patches, which, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, constitute the properties of the literary histrio.

I am aware, on the other hand, that the case is by no means common, in which an author is at all in condition to retrace the steps by which his conclusions have been attained. In general, suggestions, having arisen pell-mell are pursued and forgotten in a similar manner.

For my own part, I have neither sympathy with the repugnance alluded to, nor, at any time, the least difficulty in recalling to mind the progressive steps of any

of my compositions, and, since the interest of an analysis or reconstruction, such as I have considered a desideratum, is quite independent of any real or fancied interest in the thing analysed, it will not be regarded as a breach of decorum on my part to show the modus operandi by which some one of my own works was put together. I select 'The Raven' as most generally known. It is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referable either to accident or intuition – that the work proceeded step by step, to its completion, with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem.

Let us dismiss, as irrelevant to the poem, per se, the circumstance – or say the necessity – which, in the first place, gave rise to the intention of composing a poem that should suit at once the popular and the critical taste.

We commence, then, with this intention.

The initial consideration was that of extent. If any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression – for, if two sittings be required, the affairs of the world interfere, and everything like totality is at once destroyed. But since, ceteris paribus, no poet can afford to dispense with anything that may advance his design, it but remains to be seen whether there is, in extent, any advantage to counterbalance the loss of unity which attends it. Here I say no, at once. What we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones – that is to say, of brief poetical effects. It is needless to demonstrate that a poem is such only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating the soul; and all intense excitements are, through a psychal necessity, brief. For this reason, at least, one-half of the "Paradise Lost" is essentially prose – a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, inevitably, with corresponding depressions – the whole being deprived, through the extremeness of its length, of the vastly important artistic element, totality, or unity of effect.

It appears evident, then, that there is a distinct limit, as regards length, to all works of literary art – the limit of a single sitting – and that, although in certain classes of prose composition, such as "Robinson Crusoe" (demanding no unity), this

limit may be advantageously overpassed, it can never properly be overpassed in a poem. Within this limit, the extent of a poem may be made to bear mathematical relation to its merit – in other words, to the excitement or elevation –again, in other words, to the degree of the true poetical effect which it is capable of inducing; for it is clear that the brevity must be in direct ratio of the intensity of the intended effect – this, with one proviso – that a certain degree of duration is absolutely requisite for the production of any effect at all.

Holding in view these considerations, as well as that degree of excitement which I deemed not above the popular, while not below the critical taste, I reached at once what I conceived the proper length for my intended poem – a length of about one hundred lines. It is, in fact, a hundred and eight.

My next thought concerned the choice of an impression, or effect, to be conveyed: and here I may as well observe that throughout the construction, I kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work universally appreciable. I should be carried too far out of my immediate topic were I to demonstrate a point upon which I have repeatedly insisted, and which, with the poetical, stands not in the slightest need of demonstration – the point, I mean, that Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem. A few words, however, in elucidation of my real meaning, which some of my friends have evinced a disposition to misrepresent. That pleasure which is at once the most intense, the most elevating, and the most pure is, I believe, found in the contemplation of the beautiful. When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect – they refer, in short, just to that intense and pure elevation of soul – not of intellect, or of heart – upon which I have commented, and which is experienced in consequence of contemplating the "beautiful." Now I designate Beauty as the province of the poem, merely because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring from direct causes – that objects should be attained through means best adapted for their attainment – no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation alluded to is most readily attained in the poem. Now the object Truth, or

the satisfaction of the intellect, and the object Passion, or the excitement of the heart, are, although attainable to a certain extent in poetry, far more readily attainable in prose. Truth, in fact, demands a precision, and Passion, a homeliness (the truly passionate will comprehend me), which are absolutely antagonistic to that Beauty which, I maintain, is the excitement or pleasurable elevation of the soul. It by no means follows, from anything here said, that passion, or even truth, may not be introduced, and even profitably introduced, into a poem for they may serve in elucidation, or aid the general effect, as do discords in music, by contrast – but the true artist will always contrive, first, to tone them into proper subservience to the predominant aim, and, secondly, to enveil them, as far as possible, in that Beauty which is the atmosphere and the essence of the poem.

Regarding, then, Beauty as my province, my next question referred to the tone of its highest manifestation – and all experience has shown that this tone is one of sadness. Beauty of whatever kind in its supreme development invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones.

The length, the province, and the tone, being thus determined, I betook myself to ordinary induction, with the view of obtaining some artistic piquancy which might serve me as a key-note in the construction of the poem – some pivot upon which the whole structure might turn. In carefully thinking over all the usual artistic effects – or more properly points, in the theatrical sense – I did not fail to perceive immediately that no one had been so universally employed as that of the refrain. The universality of its employment sufficed to assure me of its intrinsic value, and spared me the necessity of submitting it to analysis. I considered it, however, with regard to its susceptibility of improvement, and soon saw it to be in a primitive condition. As commonly used, the refrain, or burden, not only is limited to lyric verse, but depends for its impression upon the force of monotone – both in sound and thought. The pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity – of repetition. I resolved to diversify, and so heighten the effect, by adhering in general

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to the monotone of sound, while I continually varied that of thought: that is to say, I determined to produce continuously novel effects, by the variation of the application of the refrain – the refrain itself remaining for the most part, unvaried.

These points being settled, I next bethought me of the nature of my refrain. Since its application was to be repeatedly varied it was clear that the refrain itself must be brief, for there would have been an insurmountable difficulty in frequent variations of application in any sentence of length. In proportion to the brevity of the sentence would, of course, be the facility of the variation. This led me at once to a single word as the best refrain.

The question now arose as to the character of the word. Having made up my mind to a refrain, the division of the poem into stanzas was of course a corollary, the refrain forming the close to each stanza. That such a close, to have force, must be sonorous and susceptible of protracted emphasis, admitted no doubt, and these considerations inevitably led me to the long o as the most sonorous vowel in connection with r as the most producible consonant.

The sound of the refrain being thus determined, it became necessary to select a word embodying this sound, and at the same time in the fullest possible keeping with that melancholy which I had pre-determined as the tone of the poem. In such a search it would have been absolutely impossible to overlook the word "Nevermore." In fact it was the very first which presented itself.

The next desideratum was a pretext for the continuous use of the one word "nevermore." In observing the difficulty which I had at once found in inventing a sufficiently plausible reason for its continuous repetition, I did not fail to perceive that this difficulty arose solely from the preassumption that the word was to be so continuously or monotonously spoken by a human being – I did not fail to perceive, in short, that the difficulty lay in the reconciliation of this monotony with the exercise of reason on the part of the creature repeating the word. Here, then, immediately arose the idea of a non-reasoning creature capable of speech, and very naturally, a parrot, in the first instance, suggested itself, but was superseded

forthwith by a Raven as equally capable of speech, and infinitely more in keeping with the intended tone.

I had now gone so far as the conception of a Raven, the bird of ill-omen, monotonously repeating the one word "Nevermore" at the conclusion of each stanza in a poem of melancholy tone, and in length about one hundred lines. Now, never losing sight of the object – supremeness or perfection at all points, I asked myself – "Of all melancholy topics what, according to the universal understanding of mankind, is the most melancholy?" Death, was the obvious reply. "And when," I said, "is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?" From what I have already explained at some length the answer here also is obvious – "When it most closely allies itself to Beauty: the death then of a beautiful woman is unquestionably the most poetical topic in the world, and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover."

I had now to combine the two ideas of a lover lamenting his deceased mistress and a Raven continuously repeating the word "Nevermore." I had to combine these, bearing in mind my design of varying at every turn the application of the word repeated, but the only intelligible mode of such combination is that of imagining the Raven employing the word in answer to the queries of the lover. And here it was that I saw at once the opportunity afforded for the effect on which I had been depending, that is to say, the effect of the variation of application. I saw that I could make the first query propounded by the lover – the first query to which the Raven should reply "Nevermore" – that I could make this first query a commonplace one, the second less so, the third still less, and so on, until at length the lover, startled from his original nonchalance by the melancholy character of the word itself, by its frequent repetition, and by a consideration of the ominous reputation of the fowl that uttered it, is at length excited to superstition, and wildly propounds queries of a far different character – queries whose solution he has passionately at heart – propounds them half in superstition and half in that species of despair which delights in self-torture – propounds them not altogether because he

believes in the prophetic or demoniac character of the bird (which reason assures him is merely repeating a lesson learned by rote), but because he experiences a frenzied pleasure in so modelling his questions as to receive from the expected "Nevermore" the most delicious because the most intolerable of sorrows. Perceiving the opportunity thus afforded me, or, more strictly, thus forced upon me in the progress of the construction, I first established in my mind the climax or concluding query – that query to which "Nevermore" should be in the last place an answer – that query in reply to which this word "Nevermore" should involve the utmost conceivable amount of sorrow and despair.

Here then the poem may be said to have had its beginning – at the end where all works of art should begin – for it was here at this point of my preconsiderations that I first put pen to paper in the composition of the stanza:

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! prophet still if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us – by that God we both adore,
Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore –
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."
Quoth the Raven – "Nevermore."

I composed this stanza, at this point, first that, by establishing the climax, I might the better vary and graduate, as regards seriousness and importance, the preceding queries of the lover, and secondly, that I might definitely settle the rhythm, the metre, and the length and general arrangement of the stanza, as well as graduate the stanzas which were to precede, so that none of them might surpass this in rhythmical effect. Had I been able in the subsequent composition to construct more vigorous stanzas I should without scruple have purposely enfeebled them so as not to interfere with the climacteric effect.

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And here I may as well say a few words of the versification. My first object (as usual) was originality. The extent to which this has been neglected in versification is one of the most unaccountable things in the world. Admitting that there is little possibility of variety in mere rhythm, it is still clear that the possible varieties of metre and stanza are absolutely infinite, and yet, for centuries, no man, in verse, has ever done, or ever seemed to think of doing, an original thing. The fact is that originality (unless in minds of very unusual force) is by no means a matter, as some suppose, of impulse or intuition. In general, to be found, it must be elaborately sought, and although a positive merit of the highest class, demands in its attainment less of invention than negation.

Of course I pretend to no originality in either the rhythm or metre of the "Raven." The former is trochaic – the latter is octametre acatalectic, alternating with heptametre catalectic repeated in the refrain of the fifth verse, and terminating with tetrametre catalectic. Less pedantically the feet employed throughout (trochees) consist of a long syllable followed by a short, the first line of the stanza consists of eight of these feet, the second of seven and a half (in effect two-thirds), the third of eight, the fourth of seven and a half, the fifth the same, the sixth three and a half. Now, each of these lines taken individually has been employed before, and what originality the "Raven" has, is in their combination into stanza; nothing even remotely approaching this has ever been attempted. The effect of this originality of combination is aided by other unusual and some altogether novel effects, arising from an extension of the application of the principles of rhyme and alliteration.

The next point to be considered was the mode of bringing together the lover and the Raven – and the first branch of this consideration was the locale. For this the most natural suggestion might seem to be a forest, or the fields – but it has always appeared to me that a close circumscription of space is absolutely necessary to the effect of insulated incident – it has the force of a frame to a picture. It has an indisputable moral power in keeping concentrated the attention, and, of course, must not be confounded with mere unity of place.

I determined, then, to place the lover in his chamber – in a chamber rendered sacred to him by memories of her who had frequented it. The room is represented as richly furnished – this in mere pursuance of the ideas I have already explained on the subject of Beauty, as the sole true poetical thesis.

The locale being thus determined, I had now to introduce the bird – and the thought of introducing him through the window was inevitable. The idea of making the lover suppose, in the first instance, that the flapping of the wings of the bird against the shutter, is a "tapping" at the door, originated in a wish to increase, by prolonging, the reader's curiosity, and in a desire to admit the incidental effect arising from the lover's throwing open the door, finding all dark, and thence adopting the half-fancy that it was the spirit of his mistress that knocked.

I made the night tempestuous, first to account for the Raven's seeking admission, and secondly, for the effect of contrast with the (physical) serenity within the chamber.

I made the bird alight on the bust of Pallas, also for the effect of contrast between the marble and the plumage – it being understood that the bust was absolutely suggested by the bird – the bust of Pallas being chosen, first, as most in keeping with the scholarship of the lover, and secondly, for the sonorousness of the word, Pallas, itself.

About the middle of the poem, also, I have availed myself of the force of contrast, with a view of deepening the ultimate impression. For example, an air of the fantastic – approaching as nearly to the ludicrous as was admissible – is given to the Raven's entrance. He comes in "with many a flirt and flutter.

„Not the least obeisance made he – not a moment stopped or stayed he,
But with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door."

In the two stanzas which follow, the design is more obviously carried out: –

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"Then this ebony bird, beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore –
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore?"
Quoth the Raven– "Nevermore."

"Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning– little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door–
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

The effect of the denouement being thus provided for, I immediately drop the fantastic for a tone of the most profound seriousness– this tone commencing in the stanza directly following the one last quoted, with the line,

"But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only", etc.

From this epoch the lover no longer jests– no longer sees anything even of the fantastic in the Raven's demeanour. He speaks of him as a "grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore," and feels the "fiery eyes" burning into his "bosom's core." This revolution of thought, or fancy, on the lover's part, is intended to induce a similar one on the part of the reader– to bring the mind into a proper frame for the denouement– which is now brought about as rapidly and as directly as possible.

With the denouement proper– with the Raven's reply, "Nevermore," to the lover's final demand if he shall meet his mistress in another world– the poem, in its

obvious phase, that of a simple narrative, may be said to have its completion. So far, everything is within the limits of the accountable– of the real. A raven, having learned by rote the single word "Nevermore," and having escaped from the custody of its owner, is driven at midnight, through the violence of a storm, to seek admission at a window from which a light still gleams– the chamber–window of a student, occupied half in poring over a volume, half in dreaming of a beloved mistress deceased. The casement being thrown open at the fluttering of the bird's wings, the bird itself perches on the most convenient seat out of the immediate reach of the student, who amused by the incident and the oddity of the visitor's demeanour, demands of it, in jest and without looking for a reply, its name. The raven addressed, answers with its customary word, "Nevermore"– a word which finds immediate echo in the melancholy heart of the student, who, giving utterance aloud to certain thoughts suggested by the occasion, is again startled by the fowl's repetition of "Nevermore." The student now guesses the state of the case, but is impelled, as I have before explained, by the human thirst for self-torture, and in part by superstition, to propound such queries to the bird as will bring him, the lover, the most of the luxury of sorrow, through the anticipated answer, "Nevermore." With the indulgence, to the extreme, of this self-torture, the narration, in what I have termed its first or obvious phase, has a natural termination, and so far there has been no overstepping of the limits of the real.

But in subjects so handled, however skillfully, or with however vivid an array of incident, there is always a certain hardness or nakedness which repels the artistical eye. Two things are invariably required – first, some amount of complexity, or more properly, adaptation; and, secondly, some amount of suggestiveness some under-current, however indefinite, of meaning. It is this latter, in especial, which imparts to a work of art so much of that richness (to borrow from colloquy a forcible term), which we are too fond of confounding with the ideal. It is the excess of the suggested meaning – it is the rendering this the upper instead of the under-current

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of the theme – which turns into prose (and that of the very flattest kind), the so-called poetry of the so-called transcendentalists.

Holding these opinions, I added the two concluding stanzas of the poem – their suggestiveness being thus made to pervade all the narrative which has preceded them. The under-current of meaning is rendered first apparent in the line –

> "Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"
> Quoth the Raven "Nevermore!"

It will be observed that the words, "from out my heart," involve the first metaphorical expression in the poem. They, with the answer, "Nevermore," dispose the mind to seek a moral in all that has been previously narrated. The reader begins now to regard the Raven as emblematical – but it is not until the very last line of the very last stanza that the intention of making him emblematical of Mournful and never ending Remembrance is permitted distinctly to be seen:

> "And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting,
> On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
> And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon that is dreaming,
> And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
> And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
> Shall be lifted – nevermore."

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1836. William M. **THACKERAY**. (1811-1863) (extract) ***The Book of Snobs*** *by One of Themselves*. written 1848.	
Prefatory Remarks. **Chapters from 1 to 7.**	

Prefatory Remarks.

(The necessity of a work on Snobs, demonstrated from History, and proved by felicitous illustrations:—I am the individual destined to write that work—My vocation is announced in terms of great eloquence—I show that the world has been gradually preparing itself for the *work* and the *man*—Snobs are to be studied like other objects of Natural Science, and are a part of the Beautiful (with a large B). They pervade all classes—Affecting instance of Colonel Snobley.)

We have all read a statement, (the authenticity of which I take leave to doubt entirely, for upon what calculations I should like to know is it founded?)—we have all, I say, been favoured by perusing a remark, that when the times and necessities of the world call for a Man, that individual is found. Thus at the French Revolution (which the reader will be pleased to have introduced so early), when it was requisite to administer a corrective dose to the nation, Robespierre was found; a most foul and nauseous dose indeed, and swallowed eagerly by the patient, greatly to the latter's ultimate advantage: thus, when it became necessary to kick John Bull out of America, Mr. Washington stepped forward, and performed that job to satisfaction: thus, when the Earl of Aldborough was unwell, Professor Holloway appeared with his pills, and cured his lordship, as per advertisement, &c. &c.. Numberless instances might be adduced to show that when a nation is in great want, the relief is at hand;

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just as in the Pantomime (that microcosm) where when *clown* wants anything—a warming-pan, a pump-handle, a goose, or a lady's tippet—a fellow comes sauntering out from behind the side-scenes with the very article in question.

Again, when men commence an undertaking, they always are prepared to show that the absolute necessities of the world demanded its completion.—Say it is a railroad: the directors begin by stating that 'A more intimate communication between Bathershins and Derrynane Beg is necessary for the advancement of civilization, and demanded by the multitudinous acclamations of the great Irish people.' Or suppose it is a newspaper: the prospectus states that 'At a time when the Church is in danger, threatened from without by savage fanaticism and miscreant unbelief, and undermined from within by dangerous Jesuitism, and suicidal Schism, a Want has been universally felt—a suffering people has looked abroad—for an Ecclesiastical Champion and Guardian. A body of Prelates and Gentlemen have therefore stepped forward in this our hour of danger, and determined on establishing the *beadle* newspaper,' &c. &c. One or other of these points at least is incontrovertible: the public wants a thing, therefore it is supplied with it; or the public is supplied with a thing, therefore it wants it.

I have long gone about with a conviction on my mind that I had a work to do—a Work, if you like, with a great W; a Purpose to fulfil; a chasm to leap into, like Curtius, horse and foot; a Great Social Evil to Discover and to Remedy. That Conviction Has Pursued me for Years. It has Dogged me in the Busy Street; Seated Itself By Me in The Lonely Study; Jogged My Elbow as it Lifted the Wine-cup at The Festive Board; Pursued me through the Maze of Rotten Row; Followed me in Far Lands. On Brighton's Shingly Beach, or Margate's Sand, the Voice Outpiped the Roaring of the Sea; it Nestles in my Nightcap, and It Whispers, 'Wake, Slumberer, thy Work Is Not Yet Done.' Last Year, By Moonlight, in the Colosseum, the Little Sedulous Voice Came To Me and Said, 'Smith, or Jones' (The Writer's Name is Neither Here nor There), 'Smith or Jones, my fine fellow, this is all very well, but you ought to be at home writing your great work on *snobs*.'

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When a man has this sort of vocation it is all nonsense attempting to elude it. He must speak out to the nations; he must unbusm himself, as Jeames would say, or choke and die. 'Mark to yourself,' I have often mentally exclaimed to your humble servant, 'the gradual way in which you have been prepared for, and are now led by an irresistible necessity to enter upon your great labour. First, the World was made: then, as a matter of course, Snobs; they existed for years and years, and were no more known than America. But presently,—*ingens patebat tellus*,—the people became darkly aware that there was such a race. Not above five-and-twenty years since, a name, an expressive monosyllable, arose to designate that race. That name has spread over England like railroads subsequently; Snobs are known and recognised throughout an Empire on which I am given to understand the Sun never sets. *Punch* appears at the ripe season, to chronicle their history: and the individual comes forth to write that history in *Punch*.'

I have (and for this gift I congratulate myself with Deep and Abiding Thankfulness) an eye for a Snob. If the Truthful is the Beautiful, it is Beautiful to study even the Snobbish; to track Snobs through history, as certain little dogs in Hampshire hunt out truffles; to sink shafts in society and come upon rich veins of Snobore. Snobbishness is like Death in a quotation from Horace, which I hope you never have heard, 'beating with equal foot at poor men's doors, and kicking at the gates of Emperors.' It is a great mistake to judge of Snobs lightly, and think they exist among the lower classes merely. An immense percentage of Snobs, I believe, is to be found in every rank of this mortal life. You must not judge hastily or vulgarly of Snobs: to do so shows that you are yourself a Snob. I myself have been taken for one.

When I was taking the waters at Bagnigge Wells, and living at the 'Imperial Hotel' there, there used to sit opposite me at breakfast, for a short time, a Snob so insufferable that I felt I should never get any benefit of the waters so long as he remained. His name was Lieutenant-Colonel Snobley, of a certain dragoon regiment. He wore japanned boots and moustaches: he lisped, drawled, and left the 'r's' out of

his words: he was always flourishing about, and smoothing his lacquered whiskers with a huge flaming bandanna, that filled the room with an odour of musk so stifling that I determined to do battle with that Snob, and that either he or I should quit the Inn. I first began harmless conversations with him; frightening him exceedingly, for he did not know what to do when so attacked, and had never the slightest notion that anybody would take such a liberty with him as to speak first: then I handed him the paper: then, as he would take no notice of these advances, I used to look him in the face steadily and—and use my fork in the light of a toothpick. After two mornings of this practice, he could bear it no longer, and fairly quitted the place.

Should the Colonel see this, will he remember the Gent who asked him if he thought Publicoaler was a fine writer, and drove him from the Hotel with a four-pronged fork?

Chapter I—The Snob Playfully Dealt with.

There are relative and positive Snobs. I mean by positive, such persons as are Snobs everywhere, in all companies, from morning till night, from youth to the grave, being by Nature endowed with Snobbishness—and others who are Snobs only in certain circumstances and relations of life.

For instance: I once knew a man who committed before me an act as atrocious as that which I have indicated in the last chapter as performed by me for the purpose of disgusting Colonel Snobley; viz, the using the fork in the guise of a toothpick. I once, I say, knew a man who, dining in my company at the 'Europa Coffee-house,' (opposite the Grand Opera, and, as everybody knows, the only decent place for dining at Naples,) ate peas with the assistance of his knife. He was a person with whose society I was greatly pleased at first—indeed, we had met in the crater of Mount Vesuvius, and were subsequently robbed and held to ransom by brigands in

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Calabria, which is nothing to the purpose—a man of great powers, excellent heart, and varied information; but I had never before seen him with a dish of pease, and his conduct in regard to them caused me the deepest pain.

After having seen him thus publicly comport himself, but one course was open to me—to cut his acquaintance. I commissioned a mutual friend (the Honourable Poly Anthus) to break the matter to this gentleman as delicately as possible, and to say that painful circumstances—in nowise affecting Mr. Marrowfat's honour, or my esteem for him—had occurred, which obliged me to forego my intimacy with him; and accordingly we met and gave each other the cut direct that night at the Duchess of Monte Fiasco's ball.

Everybody at Naples remarked the separation of the Damon and Pythias—indeed, Marrowfat had saved my life more than once—but, as an English gentleman, what was I to do?

My dear friend was, in this instance, the Snob *Relative*. It is not snobbish of persons of rank of any other nation to employ their knife in the manner alluded to. I have seen Monte Fiasco clean his trencher with his knife, and every Principe in company doing likewise. I have seen, at the hospitable board of H.I.H. the Grand Duchess Stephanie of Baden—(who, if these humble lines should come under her Imperial eyes, is besought to remember graciously the most devoted of her servants)—I have seen, I say, the Hereditary Princess of Potztausend-Donnerwetter (that serenely-beautiful woman) use her knife in lieu of a fork or spoon; I have seen her almost swallow it, by Jove! like Ramo Samee, the Indian juggler. And did I blench? Did my estimation for the Princess diminish? No, lovely Amalia! One of the truest passions that ever was inspired by woman was raised in this bosom by that lady. Beautiful one! long, long may the knife carry food to those lips! the reddest and loveliest in the world!

The cause of my quarrel with Marrowfat I never breathed to mortal soul for four years. We met in the halls of the aristocracy—our friends and relatives. We

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jostled each other in the dance or at the board; but the estrangement continued, and seemed irrevocable, until the fourth of June, last year.

We met at Sir George Golloper's. We were placed, he on the right, your humble servant on the left of the admirable Lady G.. Peas formed part of the banquet—ducks and green peas. I trembled as I saw Marrowfat helped, and turned away sickening, lest I should behold the weapon darting down his horrid jaws.

What was my astonishment, what my delight, when I saw him use his fork like any other Christian! He did not administer the cold steel once. Old times rushed back upon me—the remembrance of old services—his rescuing me from the brigands—his gallant conduct in the affair with the Countess Dei Spinachi—his lending me the 1,700₤. I almost burst into tears with joy—my voice trembled with emotion. 'George, my boy!' I exclaimed, 'George Marrowfat, my dear fellow! a glass of wine!'

Blushing—deeply moved—almost as tremulous as I was myself, George answered, '*Frank, shall it be Hock or Madeira*? I could have hugged him to my heart but for the presence of the company. Little did Lady Golloper know what was the cause of the emotion which sent the duckling I was carving into her ladyship's pink satin lap. The most good-natured of women pardoned the error, and the butler removed the bird.

We have been the closest friends over since, nor, of course, has George repeated his odious habit. He acquired it at a country school, where they cultivated peas and only used two-pronged forks, and it was only by living on the Continent where the usage of the four-prong is general, that he lost the horrible custom.

In this point—and in this only—I confess myself a member of the Silver-Fork School; and if this tale but induce one of my readers to pause, to examine in his own mind solemnly, and ask, 'Do I or do I not eat peas with a knife?'—to see the ruin which may fall upon himself by continuing the practice, or his family by beholding the example, these lines will not have been written in vain. And now, whatever other authors may be, I flatter myself, it will be allowed that I, at least, am a moral man.

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By the way, as some readers are dull of comprehension, I may as well say what the moral of this history is. The moral is this—Society having ordained certain customs, men are bound to obey the law of society, and conform to its harmless orders.

If I should go to the British and Foreign Institute (and heaven forbid I should go under any pretext or in any costume whatever)—if I should go to one of the tea-parties in a dressing-gown and slippers, and not in the usual attire of a gentleman, viz, pumps, a gold waistcoat, a crush hat, a sham frill, and a white choker—I should be insulting society, and *eating pease with my knife*. Let the porters of the Institute hustle out the individual who shall so offend. Such an offender is, as regards society, a most emphatical and refractory Snob. It has its code and police as well as governments, and he must conform who would profit by the decrees set forth for their common comfort.

I am naturally averse to egotism, and hate selflaudation consumedly; but I can't help relating here a circumstance illustrative of the point in question, in which I must think I acted with considerable prudence.

Being at Constantinople a few years since—(on a delicate mission),—the Russians were playing a double game, between ourselves, and it became necessary on our part to employ an *extra negotiator*—Leckerbiss Pasha of Roumelia, then Chief Galeongee of the Porte, gave a diplomatic banquet at his summer palace at Bujukdere. I was on the left of the Galeongee, and the Russian agent, Count de Diddloff, on his dexter side. Diddloff is a dandy who would die of a rose in aromatic pain: he had tried to have me assassinated three times in the course of the negotiation; but of course we were friends in public, and saluted each other in the most cordial and charming manner.

The Galeongee is—or was, alas! for a bow-string has done for him—a staunch supporter of the old school of Turkish politics. We dined with our fingers, and had flaps of bread for plates; the only innovation he admitted was the use of European liquors, in which he indulged with great gusto. He was an enormous eater. Amongst the dishes a very large one was placed before him of a lamb dressed in its wool,

stuffed with prunes, garlic, assafoetida, capsicums, and other condiments, the most abominable mixture that ever mortal smelt or tasted. The Galeongee ate of this hugely; and pursuing the Eastern fashion, insisted on helping his friends right and left, and when he came to a particularly spicy morsel, would push it with his own hands into his guests' very mouths.

I never shall forget the look of poor Diddloff, when his Excellency, rolling up a large quantity of this into a ball and exclaiming, 'Buk Buk' (it is very good), administered the horrible bolus to Diddloff. The Russian's eyes rolled dreadfully as he received it: he swallowed it with a grimace that I thought must precede a convulsion, and seizing a bottle next him, which he thought was Sauterne, but which turned out to be French brandy, he drank off nearly a pint before he know his error. It finished him; he was carried away from the dining-room almost dead, and laid out to cool in a summer-house on the Bosphorus.

When it came to my turn, I took down the condiment with a smile, said 'Bismillah,' licked my lips with easy gratification, and when the next dish was served, made up a ball myself so dexterously, and popped it down the old Galeongee's mouth with so much grace, that his heart was won. Russia was put out of court at once and *The Treaty* of Kabobanople *was signed*. As for Diddloff, all was over with *him*: he was recalled to St. Petersburg, and Sir Roderick Murchison saw him, under the No. 3967, working in the Ural mines.

The moral of this tale, I need not say, is, that there are many disagreeable things in society which you are bound to take down, and to do so with a smiling face.

Chapter II—The Snob Royal.

Long since at the commencement of the reign of her present Gracious Majesty, it chanced 'on a fair summer evening,' as Mr. James would say, that three or four

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young cavaliers were drinking a cup of wine after dinner at the hostelry called the 'King's Arms,' kept by Mistress Anderson, in the royal village of Kensington. 'Twas a balmy evening, and the wayfarers looked out on a cheerful scene. The tall elms of the ancient gardens were in full leaf, and countless chariots of the nobility of England whirled by to the neighbouring palace, where princely Sussex (whose income latterly only allowed him to give tea-parties) entertained his royal niece at a state banquet. When the caroches of the nobles had set down their owners at the banquethall, their varlets and servitors came to quaff a flagon of nut-brown ale in the 'King's Arms' gardens hard by. We watched these fellows from our lattice. By Saint Boniface 'twas a rare sight!

The tulips in Mynheer Van Dunck's gardens were not more gorgeous than the liveries of these pie-coated retainers. All the flowers of the field bloomed in their ruffled bosoms, all the hues of the rainbow gleamed in their plush breeches, and the long-caned ones walked up and down the garden with that charming solemnity, that delightful quivering swagger of the calves, which has always had a frantic fascination for us. The walk was not wide enough for them as the shoulder-knots strutted up and down it in canary, and crimson, and light blue.

Suddenly, in the midst of their pride, a little bell was rung, a side door opened, and (after setting down their Royal Mistress) her Majesty's own crimson footmen, with epaulets and black plushes, came in.

It was pitiable to see the other poor Johns slink off at this arrival! Not one of the honest private Plushes could stand up before the Royal Flunkeys. They left the walk: they sneaked into dark holes and drank their beer in silence. The Royal Plush kept possession of the garden until the Royal Plush dinner was announced, when it retired, and we heard from the pavilion where they dined, conservative cheers, and speeches, and Kentish fires. The other Flunkeys we never saw more.

My dear Flunkeys, so absurdly conceited at one moment and so abject at the next, are but the types of their masters in this world. *He who meanly admires mean things is a snob*—perhaps that is a safe definition of the character.

And this is why I have, with the utmost respect, ventured to place The Snob Royal at the head of my list, causing all others to give way before him, as the Flunkeys before the royal representative in Kensington Gardens. To say of such and such a Gracious Sovereign that he is a Snob, is but to say that his Majesty is a man. Kings, too, are men and Snobs. In a country where Snobs are in the majority, a prime one, surely, cannot be unfit to govern. With us they have succeeded to admiration.
For instance, James I. was a Snob, and a Scotch Snob, than which the world contains no more offensive creature. He appears to have had not one of the good qualities of a man—neither courage, nor generosity, nor honesty, nor brains; but read what the great Divines and Doctors of England said about him! Charles II., his grandson, was a rogue, but not a Snob; whilst Louis XIV., his old squaretoes of a contemporary,—the great worshipper of Bigwiggery—has always struck me as a most undoubted and Royal Snob.

I will not, however, take instances from our own country of Royal Snobs, but refer to a neighbouring kingdom, that of Brentford—and its monarch, the late great and lamented Gorgius IV. With the same humility with which the footmen at the 'King's Arms' gave way before the Plush Royal, the aristocracy of the Brentford nation bent down and truckled before Gorgius, and proclaimed him the first gentleman in Europe. And it's a wonder to think what is the gentlefolks' opinion of a gentleman, when they gave Gorgius such a title.

What is it to be a gentleman? Is it to be honest, to be gentle, to be generous, to be brave, to be wise, and, possessing all these qualities, to exercise them in the most graceful outward manner? Ought a gentleman to be a loyal son, a true husband, and honest father? Ought his life to be decent—his bills to be paid—his tastes to be high and elegant—his aims in life lofty and noble? In a word, ought not the Biography of a First Gentleman in Europe to be of such a nature that it might be read in Young Ladies' Schools with advantage, and studied with profit in the Seminaries of Young Gentlemen? I put this question to all instructors of youth—to Mrs. Ellis and the Women of England; to all schoolmasters, from Doctor Hawtrey down to Mr.

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Squeers. I conjure up before me an awful tribunal of youth and innocence, attended by its venerable instructors (like the ten thousand red-cheeked charity-children in Saint Paul's), sitting in judgment, and Gorgius pleading his cause in the midst. Out of Court, out of Court, fat old Florizel! Beadles, turn out that bloated, pimple-faced man!—If Gorgius *must* have a statue in the new Palace which the Brentford nation is building, it ought to be set up in the Flunkeys' Hall. He should be represented cutting out a coat, in which art he is said to have excelled. He also invented Maraschino punch, a shoe-buckle (this was in the vigour of his youth, and the prime force of his invention), and a Chinese pavilion, the most hideous building in the world. He could drive a four-in-hand very nearly as well as the Brighton coachman, could fence elegantly, and it is said, played the fiddle well. And he smiled with such irresistible fascination, that persons who were introduced into his august presence became his victims, body and soul, as a rabbit becomes the prey of a great big boa-constrictor.

I would wager that if Mr. Widdicomb were, by a revolution, placed on the throne of Brentford, people would be equally fascinated by his irresistibly majestic smile and tremble as they knelt down to kiss his hand. If he went to Dublin they would erect an obelisk on the spot where he first landed, as the Paddylanders did when Gorgius visited them. We have all of us read with delight that story of the King's voyage to Haggisland, where his presence inspired such a fury of loyalty and where the most famous man of the country—the Baron of Bradwardine—coming on board the royal yacht, and finding a glass out of which Gorgius had drunk, put it into his coatpocket as an inestimable relic, and went ashore in his boat again. But the Baron sat down upon the glass and broke it, and cut his coat-tails very much; and the inestimable relic was lost to the world for ever. O noble Bradwardine! what old-world superstition could set you on your knees before such an idol as that?

If you want to moralize upon the mutability of human affairs, go and see the figure of Gorgius in his real, identical robes, at the waxwork.—Admittance one shilling. Children and flunkeys sixpence. Go, and pay sixpence.

Chapter III—The Influence of the Aristocracy on Snobs.

Last Sunday week, being at church in this city, and the service just ended, I heard two Snobs conversing about the Parson. One was asking the other who the clergyman was? 'He is Mr. So-and-so,' the second Snob answered, 'domestic chaplain to the Earl of What-d'ye-call'im.' 'Oh, is he' said the first Snob, with a tone of indescribable satisfaction.—The Parson's orthodoxy and identity were at once settled in this Snob's mind. He knew no more about the Earl than about the Chaplain, but he took the latter's character upon the authority of the former; and went home quite contented with his Reverence, like a little truckling Snob.

This incident gave me more matter for reflection even than the sermon: and wonderment at the extent and prevalence of Lordolatory in this country. What could it matter to Snob whether his Reverence were chaplain to his Lordship or not? What Peerageworship there is all through this free country! How we are all implicated in it, and more or less down on our knees.—And with regard to the great subject on hand, I think that the influence of the Peerage upon Snobbishness has been more remarkable than that of any other institution. The increase, encouragement, and maintenance of Snobs are among the 'priceless services,' as Lord John Russell says, which we owe to the nobility.

It can't be otherwise. A man becomes enormously rich, or he jobs successfully in the aid of a Minister, or he wins a great battle, or executes a treaty, or is a clever lawyer who makes a multitude of fees and ascends the bench; and the country rewards him for ever with a gold coronet (with more or less balls or leaves) and a title, and a rank as legislator. 'Your merits are so great,' says the nation, 'that your children shall be allowed to reign over us, in a manner. It does not in the least matter that your eldest son be a fool: we think your services so remarkable, that he shall have the reversion of your honours when death vacates your noble shoes. If you are

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poor, we will give you such a sum of money as shall enable you and the eldest-born of your race for ever to live in fat and splendour. It is our wish that there should be a race set apart in this happy country, who shall hold the first rank, have the first prizes and chances in all government jobs and patronages. We cannot make all your dear children Peers—that would make Peerage common and crowd the House of Lords uncomfortably—but the young ones shall have everything a Government can give: they shall get the pick of all the places: they shall be Captains and Lieutenant-Colonels at nineteen, when hoary-headed old lieutenants are spending thirty years at drill: they shall command ships at one-and-twenty, and veterans who fought before they were born. And as we are eminently a free people, and in order to encourage all men to do their duty, we say to any man of any rank—get enormously rich, make immense fees as a lawyer, or great speeches, or distinguish yourself and win battles—and you, even you, shall come into the privileged class, and your children shall reign naturally over ours.'

How can we help Snobbishness, with such a prodigious national institution erected for its worship? How can we help cringing to Lords? Flesh and blood can't do otherwise. What man can withstand this prodigious temptation? Inspired by what is called a noble emulation, some people grasp at honours and win them; others, too weak or mean, blindly admire and grovel before those who have gained them; others, not being able to acquire them, furiously hate, abuse, and envy. There are only a few bland and not-in-the-least-conceited philosophers, who can behold the state of society, viz., Toadyism, organised:—base Man-and-Mammon worship, instituted by command of law:—Snobbishness, in a word, perpetuated,—and mark the phenomenon calmly. And of these calm moralists, is there one, I wonder, whose heart would not throb with pleasure if he could be seen walking arm-in-arm with a couple of dukes down Pall Mall? No it is impossible in our condition of society, not to be sometimes a Snob.

On one hand it encourages the commoner to be snobbishly mean, and the noble to be snobbishly arrogant. When a noble marchioness writes in her travels

about the hard necessity under which steam-boat travellers labour of being brought into contact 'with all sorts and conditions of people:' implying that a fellowship with God's creatures is disagreeable to to her Ladyship, who is their superior:—when, I say, the Marchioness of__ writes in this fashion, we must consider that out of her natural heart it would have been impossible for any woman to have had such a sentiment; but that the habit of truckling and cringing, which all who surround her have adopted towards this beautiful and magnificent lady,—this proprietor of so many black and other diamonds,—has really induced her to believe that she is the superior of the world in general: and that people are not to associate with her except awfully at a distance. I recollect being once at the city of Grand Cairo, through which a European Royal Prince was passing India-wards. One night at the inn there was a great disturbance: a man had drowned himself in the well hard by: all the inhabitants of the hotel came bustling into the Court, and amongst others your humble servant, who asked of a certain young man the reason of the disturbance. How was I to know that this young gent was a prince? He had not his crown and sceptre on: he was dressed in a white jacket and felt hat: but he looked surprised at anybody speaking to him: answered an unintelligible monosyllable, and—*beckoned his aid-de-camp to come and speak to me*. It is our fault, not that of the great, that they should fancy themselves so far above us. If you *will* fling yourself under the wheels, Juggernaut will go over you, depend upon it; and if you and I, my dear friend, had Kotow performed before us every day,—found people whenever we appeared grovelling in slavish adoration, we should drop into the airs of superiority quite naturally, and accept the greatness with which the world insisted upon endowing us.

Here is an instance, out of Lord L__'s travels, of that calm, good-natured, undoubting way in which a great man accepts the homage of his inferiors. After making some profound and ingenious remarks about the town of Brussells, his lordship says:—'Staying some day at the Hotel de Belle Vue, a greatly overrated establishment, and not nearly as comfortable as the Hotel de France—I made

acquaintance with Dr. L__, the physician of the Mission. He was desirous of doing the honours of the place to me, and he ordered for us a *diner en gourmand* at the chief restaurateur's, maintaining it surpassed the Rocher at Paris. Six or eight partook of the entertainment, and we all agreed it was infinitely inferior to the Paris display, and much more extravagant. So much for the copy.

And so much for the gentleman who gave the dinner. Dr. L__, desirous to do his lordship 'the honour of the place,' feasts him with the best victuals money can procure—and my lord finds the entertainment extravagant and inferior. Extravagant! it was not extravagant to *him*;—Inferior! Mr. L__ did his best to satisfy those noble jaws, and my lord receives the entertainment, and dismisses the giver with a rebuke. It is like a three-tailed Pasha grumbling about an unsatisfactory backsheesh.

But how should it be otherwise in a country where Lordolatry is part of our creed, and where our children are brought up to respect the 'Peerage' as the Englishman's second Bible?

Chapter IV—The Court Circular, and Its Influence on Snobs.

Example is the best of precepts; so let us begin with a true and authentic story, showing how young aristocratic snobs are reared, and how early their Snobbishness may be made to bloom. A beautiful and fashionable lady—(pardon, gracious madam, that your story should be made public; but it is so moral that it ought to be known to the universal world)—told me that in her early youth she had a little acquaintance, who is now indeed a beautiful and fashionable lady too. In mentioning Miss Snobky, daughter of Sir Snobby Snobky, whose presentation at Court caused such a sensation, need I say more?

When Miss Snobky was so very young as to be in the nursery regions, and to walk off early mornings in St. James's Park, protected by a French governess and followed by a huge hirsute flunkey in the canary coloured livery of the Snobkys, she used occasionally in these promenades to meet with young Lord Claude Lollipop, the Marquis of Sillabub's younger son. In the very height of the season, from some unexplained cause, the Snobkys suddenly determined upon leaving town. Miss Snobky spoke to her female friend and confidante. 'What will poor Claude Lollipop say when he hears of my absence?' asked the tender-hearted child.

'Oh, perhaps he won't hear of it,' answers the confidante.

'*My dear, he will read it in the papers*,' replied the dear little fashionable rogue of seven years old. She knew already her importance, and how all the world of England, how all the would-be-genteel people, how all the silver-fork worshippers, how all the tattle-mongers, how all the grocers' ladies, the tailors' ladies, the attorneys' and merchants' ladies, and the people living at Clapham and Brunswick Square,—who have no more chance of consorting with a Snobky than my beloved reader has of dining with the Emperor of China—yet watched the movements of the Snobkys with interest and were glad to know when they came to London and left it.

Here is the account of Miss Snobky's dress, and that of her mother, Lady Snobky, from the papers:—

'*Miss snobky*.

Habit de Cour, composed of a yellow nankeen illusion dress over a slip of rich pea-green corduroy, trimmed en tablier, with bouquets of Brussels sprouts: the body and sleeves handsomely trimmed with calimanco, and festooned with a pink train and white radishes. Head-dress, carrots and lappets.

'*Lady snobky*.

'Costume de Cour, composed of a train of the most superb Pekin bandannas, elegantly trimmed with spangles, tinfoil, and red-tape. Bodice and underdress of sky-blue velveteen, trimmed with bouffants and noeuds of bell-pulls. Stomacher a muffin. Head-dress a bird's nest, with a bird of paradise, over a rich brass knocker

en ferroniere. This splendid costume, by Madame Crinoline, of Regent Street, was the object of universal admiration.'

This is what you read. Oh, Mrs. Ellis! Oh, mothers, daughters, aunts, grandmothers of England, this is the sort of writing which is put in the newspapers for you! How can you help being the mothers, daughters, &c. of Snobs, so long as this balderdash is set before you?

You stuff the little rosy foot of a Chinese young lady of fashion into a slipper that is about the size of a salt-cruet, and keep the poor little toes there imprisoned and twisted up so long that the dwarfishness becomes irremediable. Later, the foot would not expand to the natural size were you to give her a washing-tub for a shoe and for all her life she has little feet, and is a cripple. Oh, my dear Miss Wiggins, thank your stars that those beautiful feet of yours—though I declare when you walk they are so small as to be almost invisible—thank your stars that society never so practised upon them; but look around and see how many friends of ours in the highest circles have had their *brains* so prematurely and hopelessly pinched and distorted.

How can you expect that those poor creatures are to move naturally when the world and their parents have mutilated them so cruelly? As long as a *court circular* exists, how the deuce are people whose names are chronicled in it ever to believe themselves the equals of the cringing race which daily reads that abominable trash? I believe that ours is the only country in the world now where the *court circular* remains in full flourish—where you read, 'This day his Royal Highness Prince Pattypan was taken an airing in his go-cart.' 'The Princess Pimminy was taken a drive, attended by her ladies of honour, and accompanied by her doll,' &c. We laugh at the solemnity with which Saint Simon announces that *sa majeste se medicamente aujourd'hui*. Under our very noses the same folly is daily going on. That wonderful and mysterious man, the author of the *court circular*, drops in with his budget at the newspaper offices every night. I once asked the editor of a paper to allow me to lie in wait and see him.

I am told that in a kingdom where there is a German King-Consort (Portugal it must be, for the Queen of that country married a German Prince, who is greatly admired and respected by the natives), whenever the Consort takes the diversion of shooting among the rabbit-warrens of Cintra, or the pheasant-preserve of Mafra, he has a keeper to load his guns, as a matter of course, and then they are handed to the nobleman, his equerry, and the nobleman hands them to the Prince who blazes away—gives back the discharged gun to the nobleman, who gives it to the keeper, and so on. But the Prince *won't take the gun from the hands of the loader.*

As long as this unnatural and monstrous etiquette continues, Snobs there must be. The three persons engaged in this transaction are, for the time being, Snobs.

1. The keeper—the least Snob of all, because he is discharging his daily duty; but he appears here as a Snob, that is to say, in a position of debasement before another human being (the Prince), with whom he is allowed to communicate through another party. A free Portuguese gamekeeper, who professes himself to be unworthy to communicate directly with any person, confesses himself to be a Snob.

2. The nobleman in waiting is a Snob. If it degrades the Prince to receive the gun from the gamekeeper, it is degrading to the nobleman in waiting to execute that service. He acts as a Snob towards the keeper, whom he keeps from communication with the Prince—a Snob to the Prince, to whom he pays a degrading homage.

3. The King-Consort of Portugal is a Snob for insulting fellow-men in this way. There's no harm in his accepting the services of the keeper directly; but indirectly he insults the service performed, and the servants who perform it; and therefore, I say, respectfully, is a most undoubted, though royal Snob.

And then you read in the *Diario do Goberno*—'Yesterday his Majesty the King took the diversion of shooting the woods off Cintra, attended by Colonel the honourable Whiskerando Sombrero. His Majesty returned to the Necessidades to lunch, at,' &c. &c..

Oh! that *court circular*! once more, I exclaim.

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Down with the *court circular*—that engine and propagator of Snobbishness! I promise to subscribe for a year to any daily paper that shall come out without a *court circular*—were it the *Morning Herald* itself. When I read that trash, I rise in my wrath; I feel myself disloyal, a regicide, a member of the Calf's Head Club. The only *court circular* story which ever pleased me, was that of the King of Spain, who in great part was roasted, because there was not time for the Prime Minister to command the Lord Chamberlain to desire the Grand Gold Stick to order the first page in waiting to bid the chief of the flunkeys to request the House-maid of Honour to bring up a pail of water to put his Majesty out.

I am like the Pasha of three tails, to whom the Sultan sends *his court circular*, the bowstring.

It *chokes* me. May its usage be abolished for ever.

Chapter V—What Snobs Admire.

Now let us consider how difficult it is even for great men to escape from being Snobs. It is very well for the reader, whose fine feelings are disgusted by the assertion that Kings, Princes, Lords, are Snobs, to say 'You are confessedly a Snob yourself. In professing to depict Snobs, it is only your own ugly mug which you are copying with a Narcissus-like conceit and fatuity.' But I shall pardon this explosion of ill-temper on the part of my constant reader, reflecting upon the misfortune of his birth and country. It is impossible for *any* Briton, perhaps, not to be a Snob in some degree. If people can be convinced of this fact, an immense point is gained, surely. If I have pointed out the disease, let us hope that other scientific characters may discover the remedy.

If you, who are a person of the middle ranks of life, are a Snob,—you whom nobody flatters particularly; you who have no toadies; you whom no cringing

flunkeys or shopmen bow out of doors; you whom the policeman tells to move on; you who are jostled in the crowd of this world, and amongst the Snobs our brethren: consider how much harder it is for a man to escape who has not your advantages, and is all his life long subject to adulation; the butt of meanness; consider how difficult it is for the Snobs' idol not to be a Snob.

As I was discoursing with my friend Eugenio in this impressive way, Lord Buckram passed us, the son of the Marquis of Bagwig, and knocked at the door of the family mansion in Red Lion Square. His noble father and mother occupied, as everybody knows, distinguished posts in the Courts of late Sovereigns. The Marquis was Lord of the Pantry, and her Ladyship, Lady of the Powder Closet to Queen Charlotte. Buck (as I call him, for we are very familiar) gave me a nod as he passed, and I proceeded to show Eugenio how it was impossible that this nobleman should not be one of ourselves, having been practised upon by Snobs all his life.

His parents resolved to give him a public education, and sent him to school at the earliest possible period. The Reverend Otto Rose, D.D., Principal of the Preparatory Academy for young noblemen and gentlemen, Richmond Lodge, took this little Lord in hand, and fell down and worshipped him. He always introduced him to fathers and mothers who came to visit their children at the school. He referred with pride and pleasure to the most noble the Marquis of Bagwig, as one of the kind friends and patrons of his Seminary. He made Lord Buckram a bait for such a multiplicity of pupils, that a new wing was built to Richmond Lodge, and thirty-five new little white dimity beds were added to the establishment. Mm. Rose used to take out the little Lord in the one-horse chaise with her when she paid visits, until the Rector's lady and the Surgeon's wife almost died with envy. His own son and Lord Buckram having been discovered robbing an orchard together, the Doctor flogged his own flesh and blood most unmercifully for leading the young Lord astray. He parted from him with tears. There was always a letter directed to the Most Noble the Marquis ef Bagwig, on the Doctor's study table, when any visitors were received by him.

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At Eton, a great deal of Snobbishness was thrashed out of Lord Buckram, and he was birched with perfect impartiality. Even there, however, a select band of sucking tuft-hunters followed him. Young Croesus lent him three-and-twenty bran-new sovereigns out of his father's bank. Young Snaily did his exercises for him, and tried 'to know him at home;' but Young Bull licked him in a fight of fifty-five minutes, and he was caned several times with great advantage for not sufficiently polishing his master Smith's shoes. Boys are not ALL toadies in the morning of life.

But when he went to the University, crowds of toadies sprawled over him. The tutors toadied him. The fellows in hall paid him great clumsy compliments. The Dean never remarked his absence from Chapel, or heard any noise issuing from his rooms. A number of respectable young fellows, (it is among the respectable, the Baker Street class, that Snobbishness flourishes, more than among any set of people in England)—a number of these clung to him like leeches. There was no end now to Croesus's loans of money; and Buckram couldn't ride out with the hounds, but Snaily (a timid creature by nature) was in the field, and would take any leap at which his friend chose to ride. Young Rose came up to the same College, having been kept back for that express purpose by his father. He spent a quarter's allowance in giving Buckram a single dinner; but he knew there was always pardon for him for extravagance in such a cause; and a ten-pound note always came to him from home when he mentioned Buckram's name in a letter. What wild visions entered the brains of Mrs. Podge and Miss Podge, the wife and daughter of the Principal of Lord Buckram's College, I don't know, but that reverend old gentleman was too profound a flunkey by nature ever for one minute to think that a child of his could marry a nobleman. He therefore hastened on his daughter's union with Professor Crab.

When Lord Buckram, after taking his honorary degree, (for Alma Mater is a Snob, too, and truckles to a Lord like the rest,)—when Lord Buckram went abroad to finish his education, you all know what dangers he ran, and what numbers of caps were set at him. Lady Leach and her daughters followed him from Paris to Rome, and from Rome to Baden-Baden; Miss Leggitt burst into tears before his face when

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he announced his determination to quit Naples, and fainted on the neck of her mamma: Captain Macdragon, of Macdragonstown, County Tipperary, called upon him to 'explene his intintions with respect to his sisther, Miss Amalia Macdragon, of Macdragonstown,' and proposed to shoot him unless he married that spotless and beautiful young creature, who was afterwards led to the altar by Mr. Muff, at Cheltenham. If perseverance and forty thousand pounds down could have tempted him, Miss Lydia Croesus would certainly have been Lady Buckram. Count Towrowski was glad to take her with half the meney, as all the genteel world knows. And now, perhaps, the reader is anxious to know what sort of a man this is who wounded so many ladies' hearts, and who has been such a prodigious favourite with men. If we were to describe him it would be personal. Besides, it really does not matter in the least what sort of a man he is, or what his personal qualities are.

Suppose he is a young nobleman of a literary turn, and that he published poems ever so foolish and feeble, the Snobs would purchase thousands of his volumes: the publishers (who refused my Passion-Flowers, and my grand Epic at any price) would give him his own. Suppose he is a nobleman of a jovial turn, and has a fancy for wrenching off knockers, frequenting ginshops, and half murdering policemen: the public will sympathise good-naturedly with his amusements, and say he is a hearty, honest fellow. Suppose he is fond of play and the turf; and has a fancy to be a blackleg, and occasionally condescends to pluck a pigeon at cards; the public will pardon him, and many honest people will court him, as they would court a housebreaker if he happened to be a Lord. Suppose he is an idiot; yet, by the glorious constitution, he is good enough to govern US. Suppose he is an honest, highminded gentleman; so much the better for himself. But he may be an ass, and yet respected; or a ruffian, and yet be exceedingly popular; or a rogue, and yet excuses will be found for him. Snobs will still worship him. Male Snobs will do him honour, and females look kindly upon him, however hideous he may be.

Chapter VI—On Some Respectable Snobs.

Having received a great deal of obloquy for dragging monarchs, princes, and the respected nobility into the Snob category, I trust to please everybody in the present chapter, by stating my firm opinion that it is among the *respectable* classes of this vast and happy empire that the greatest profusion of Snobs is to be found. I pace down my beloved Baker Street, (I am engaged on a life of Baker, founder of this celebrated street,) I walk in Harley Street (where every other house has a hatchment), Wimpole Street, that is as cheerful as the Catacombs—a dingy Mausoleum of the genteel:—I rove round Regent's Park, where the plaster is patching off the house walls; where Methodist preachers are holding forth to three little children in the green inclosures, and puffy valetudinarians are cantering in the solitary mud:—I thread the doubtful *zig-zags* of May Fair, where Mrs. Kitty Lorimer's Brougham may be seen drawn up next door to old Lady Lollipop's belozenged family coach;—I roam through Belgravia, that pale and polite district, where all the inhabitants look prim and correct, and the mansions are painted a faint whity-brown: I lose myself in the new squares and terraces of the brilliant bran-new Bayswater-and-Tyburn-Junction line; and in one and all of these districts the same truth comes across me. I stop before any house at hazard, and say, 'O house, you are inhabited—O knocker, you are knocked at—O undressed flunkey, sunning your lazy calves as you lean against the iron railings, you are paid—by Snobs.' It is a tremendous thought that; and it is almost sufficient to drive a benevolent mind to madness to think that perhaps there is not one in ten of those houses where the 'Peerage' does not lie on the drawing-room table. Considering the harm that foolish lying book does, I would have all the copies of it burned, as the barber burned all Quixote's books of humbugging chivalry.

Look at this grand house in the middle of the square. The Earl of Loughcorrib lives there: he has fifty thousand a year. A *dejeuner dansant* given at his house last week cost, who knows how much? The mere flowers for the room and bouquets for

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the ladies cost four hundred pounds. That man in drab trousers, coming crying down the stops, is a dun: Lord Loughcorrib has ruined him, and won't see him: that is his lordship peeping through the blind of his study at him now. Go thy ways, Loughcorrib, thou art a Snob, a heartless pretender, a hypocrite of hospitality; a rogue who passes forged notes upon society;—but I am growing too eloquent.

You see that nice house, No. 23, where a butcher's boy is ringing the area-bell. He has three muttonchops in his tray. They are for the dinner of a very different and very respectable family; for Lady Susan Scraper, and her daughters, Miss Scraper and Miss Emily Scraper. The domestics, luckily for them, are on board wages—two huge footmen in light blue and canary, a fat steady coachman who is a Methodist, and a butler who would never have stayed in the family but that he was orderly to General Scraper when the General distinguished himself at Walcheren. His widow sent his portrait to the United Service Club, and it is hung up in one of the back dressing-closets there. He is represented at a parlour window with red curtains; in the distance is a whirlwind, in which cannon are firing off; and he is pointing to a chart, on which are written the words 'Walcheren, Tobago.'

Lady Susan is, as everybody knows by referring to the 'British Bible,' a daughter of the great and good Earl Bagwig before mentioned. She thinks everything belonging to her the greatest and best in the world. The first of men naturally are the Buckrams, her own race: then follow in rank the Scrapers. The General was the greatest general: his eldest son, Scraper Buckram Scraper, is at present the greatest and best; his second son the next greatest and best; and herself the paragon of women.

Indeed, she is a most respectable and honourable lady. She goes to church of course: she would fancy the Church in danger if she did not. She subscribes to Church and parish charities; and is a directress of meritorious charitable institutions—of Queen Charlotte's Lying-in Hospital, the Washerwomen's Asylum, the British Drummers' Daughters' Home, &c.. She is a model of a matron.

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The tradesman never lived who could say that he was not paid on the quarter-day. The beggars of her neighbourhood avoid her like a pestilence; for while she walks out, protected by John, that domestic has always two or three mendicity tickets ready for deserving objects. Ten guineas a year will pay all her charities. There is no respectable lady in all London who gets her name more often printed for such a sum of money.

Those three mutton-chops which you see entering at the kitchen-door will be served on the family-plate at seven o'clock this evening, the huge footman being present, and the butler in black, and the crest and coat-of-arms of the Scrapers blazing everywhere. I pity Miss Emily Scraper—she is still young—young and hungry. Is it a fact that she spends her pocket-money in buns? Malicious tongues say so; but she has very little to spare for buns, the poor little hungry soul! For the fact is, that when the footmen, and the ladies' maids, and the fat coach-horses, which are jobbed, and the six dinner-parties in the season, and the two great solemn evening-parties, and the rent of the big house, and the journey to an English or foreign watering-place for the autumn, are paid, my lady's income has dwindled away to a very small sum, and she is as poor as you or I.

You would not think it when you saw her big carriage rattling up to the drawing-room, and caught a glimpse of her plumes, lappets, and diamonds, waving over her ladyship's sandy hair and majestical hooked nose;—you would not think it when you hear 'Lady Susan Scraper's carriage' bawled out at midnight so as to disturb all Belgravia:—you would not think it when she comes rustling into church, the obsequious John behind with the bag of Prayer-books. Is it possible, you would say, that so grand and awful a personage as that can be hard-up for money? Alas! So it is.

She never heard such a word as Snob, I will engage, in this wicked and vulgar world. And, O stars and garters! how she would start if she heard that she—she, as solemn as Minerva—she, as chaste as Diana (without that heathen goddess's unladylike propensity for field-sports)—that she too was a Snob!

A Snob she is, as long as she sets that prodigious value upon herself, upon her name, upon her outward appearance, and indulges in that intolerable pomposity; as long as she goes parading abroad, like Solomon in all his glory; as long as she goes to bed—as I believe she does—with a turban and a bird of paradise in it, and a court train to her night-gown; as long as she is so insufferably virtuous and condescending; as long as she does not cut at least one of those footmen down into mutton-chops for the benefit of the young ladies.

I had my notions of her from my old schoolfellow,—her son Sydney Scraper—a Chancery barrister without any practice—the most placid, polite, and genteel of Snobs, who never exceeded his allowance of two hundred a year, and who may be seen any evening at the 'Oxford and Cambridge Club,' simpering over the Q*uarterly* R*eview*, in the blameless enjoyment of his half-pint of port.

Chapter VII—On Some Respectable Snobs.

Look at the next house to Lady Susan Scraper's. The first mansion with the awning over the door: that canopy will be let down this evening for the comfort of the friends of Sir Alured and Lady S. de Mogyns, whose parties are so much admired by the public, and the givers themselves.

Peach-coloured liveries laced with silver, and pea-green plush inexpressibles, render the De Mogyns' flunkeys the pride of the ring when they appear in Hyde Park where Lady de Mogyns, as she sits upon her satin cushions, with her dwarf spaniel in her arms, bows to the very selectest of the genteel. Times are altered now with Mary Anne, or, as she calls herself, Marian de Mogyns.

She was the daughter of Captain Flack of the Rathdrum Fencibles, who crossed with his regiment over from Ireland to Caermarthenshire ever so many years ago, and defended Wales from the Corsican invader. The Rathdrums were quartered

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at Pontydwdlm, where Marian wooed and won her De Mogyns, a young banker in the place. His attentions to Miss Flack at a race ball were such that her father said De Mogyns must either die on the field of honour, or become his son-in-law. He preferred marriage. His name was Muggins then, and his father—a flourishing banker, army-contractor, smuggler, and general jobber—almost disinherited him on account of this connection.

There is a story that Muggins the Elder was made a baronet for having lent money to a R-y-l p-rs-n-ge. I do not believe it. The R-y-l Family always paid their debts, from the Prince of Wales downwards.

Howbeit, to his life's end he remained simple Sir Thomas Muggins, representing Pontydwdlm in Parliament for many years after the war. The old banker died in course of time, and to use the affectionate phrase common on such occasions, 'cut up' prodigiously well. His son, Alfred Smith Mogyns, succeeded to the main portion of his wealth, and to his titles and the bloody hand of his scutcheon. It was not for many years after that he appeared as Sir Alured Mogyns Smyth de Mogyns, with a genealogy found out for him by the Editor of 'Fluke's Peerage,' and which appears as follows in that work:—'De Mogyns.—Sir Alured Mogyns Smyth, Second Baronet. This gentleman is a representative of one of the most ancient families of Wales, who trace their descent until it is lost in the mists of antiquity. A genealogical tree beginning with Shem is in the possession of the family, and is stated by a legend of many thousand years' date to have been drawn on papyrus by a grandson of the patriarch himself. Be this as it may, there can be no doubt of the immense antiquity of the race of Mogyns.

'In the time of Boadicea, Hogyn Mogyn, of the hundred Beeves, was a suitor and a rival of Caractacus for the hand of that Princess. He was a person gigantic in stature, and was slain by Suetonius in the battle which terminated the liberties of Britain. From him descended directly the Princes of Pontydwdlm, Mogyn of the Golden Harp (see the Mabinogion of Lady Charlotte Guest,) Bogyn-Merodac-ap-Mogyn, (the black fiend son of Mogyn,) and a long list of bards and warriors,

celebrated both in Wales and Armorica. The independent Princes of Mogyn long held out against the ruthless Kings of England, until finally Gam Mogyns made his submission to Prince Henry, son of Henry IV, and under the name of Sir David Gam de Mogyns, was distinguished at the battle of Agincourt.

From him the present Baronet is descended. (And here the descent follows in order until it comes to) Thomas Muggins, first Baronet of Pontydwdlm Castle, for 23 years Member of Parliament for that borough, who had issue, Alured Mogyns Smyth, the present Baronet, who married Marian, daughter of the late general P. Flack, of Ballyflack, in the Kingdom of Ireland of the Counts Flack of the H. R. Empire. Sir Alured has issue, Alured Caradoc, born 1819, Marian, 1811, Blanche Adeliza, Emily Doria, Adelaide Obleans, Katinka Rostopchin, Patrick Flack, died 1809.

'Arms—a mullion garbled, gules on a saltire reversed of the second. Crest—a tom-tit rampant regardant. Motto—*Ung Roy Ung Mogyns*.'

It was long before Lady de Mogyns shone as a star in the fashionable world. At first, poor Muggins was the in the hands of the Flacks, the Clancys, the Tooles, the Shanahans, his wife's Irish relations; and whilst he was yet but heir-apparent, his house overflowed with claret and the national nectar, for the benefit of Hibernian relatives. Tom Tufto absolutely left the street in which they lived in London, because he said 'it was infected with such a confounded smell of whisky from the house of those *Iwish* people.'

It was abroad that they learned to be genteel. They pushed into all foreign courts, and elbowed their way into the halls of Ambassadors. They pounced upon the stray nobility, and seized young lords travelling with their bear-leaders. They gave parties at Naples, Rome, and Paris. They got a Royal Prince to attend their *soirees* at the latter place, and it was here that they first appeared under the name of De Mogyns, which they bear with such splendour to this day.

All sorts of stories are told of the desperate efforts made by the indomitable Lady de Mogyns to gain the place she now occupies, and those of my beloved

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readers who live in middle life, and are unacquainted with the frantic struggles, the wicked feuds, the intrigues, cabals, and disappointments which, as I am given to understand, reign in the fashionable world, may bless their stars that they at least are not *Fashionable* Snobs. The intrigues set afoot by the De Mogyns to get the Duchess of Buckskin to her parties, would strike a Talleyrand with admiration. She had a brain fever after being disappointed of an invitation to Lady Aldermanbury's *The Dansant*, and would have committed suicide but for a ball at Windsor. I have the following story from my noble friend Lady Clapperclaw herself,—Lady Kathleen O'Shaughnessy that was, and daughter of the Earl of Turfanthunder:—

'When that odious disguised Irishwoman, Lady Muggins, was struggling to take her place in the world, and was bringing out her hidjous daughter Blanche,' said old Lady Clapperclaw—(Marian has a hump-back and doesn't show, but she's the only lady in the family)—'when that wretched Polly Muggins was bringing out Blanche, with her radish of a nose, and her carrots of ringlets, and her turnip for a face, she was most anxious—as her father had been a cowboy on my father's land—to be patronised by us, and asked me point-blank, in the midst of a silence at Count Volauvent's, the French Ambassador's dinner, why I had not sent her a card for my ball?

'"Because my rooms are already too full, and your ladyship would be crowded inconveniently," says I; indeed she takes up as much room as an elephant: besides I wouldn't have her, and that was flat.

'I thought my answer was a settler to her: but the next day she comes weeping to my arms—"Dear Lady Clapperclaw," says she, "it's not for *me*; I ask it for my blessed Blanche! a young creature in her first season, and not at your ball! My tender child will pine and die of vexation. I don't want to come. I will stay at home to nurse Sir Alured in the gout. Mrs. Bolster is going, I know; she will be Blanche's chaperon."

'"You wouldn't subscribe for the Rathdrum blanket and potato fund; you, who come out of the parish," says I, "and whose grandfather, honest man, kept cows there."

'"Will twenty guineas be enough, dearest Lady Clapperclaw?"

'"Twenty guineas is sufficient," says I, and she paid them; so I said, "Blanche may come, but not you, mind:" and she left me with a world of thanks.

'Would you believe it?—when my ball came, the horrid woman made her appearance with her daughter!

"Didn't I tell you not to come?" said I, in a mighty passion. "What would the world have said?" cries my Lady Muggins: "my carriage is gone for Sir Alured to the Club; let me stay only ten minutes, dearest Lady Clapperclaw."

'"Well as you are here, madam, you may stay and get your supper," I answered, and so left her, and never spoke a word more to her all night.

'And now,' screamed out old Lady Clapperclaw, clapping her hands, and speaking with more brogue than ever, 'what do you think, after all my kindness to her, the wicked, vulgar, odious, impudent upstart of s cowboy's granddaughter, has done?—she cut me yesterday in Hy' Park, and hasn't sent me a ticket for her ball to-night, though they say Prince George is to be there.'

Yes, such is the fact. In the race of fashion the resolute and active De Mogyns has passed the poor old Clapperclaw. Her progress in gentility may be traced by the sets of friends whom she has courted, and made, and cut, and left behind her. She has struggled so gallantly for polite reputation that she has won it: pitilessly kicking down the ladder as she advanced degree by degree.

Irish relations were first sacrificed; she made her father dine in the steward's room, to his perfect contentment: and would send Sir Alured thither like-wise but that he is a peg on which she hopes to hang her future honours; and is, after all, paymaster of her daughter's fortunes. He is meek and content. He has been so long a gentleman that he is used to it, and acts the part of governor very well. In the day-time he goes from the 'Union' to 'Arthur's,' and from 'Arthur's' to the 'Union.' He is

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a dead hand at piquet, and loses a very comfortable maintenance to some young fellows, at whist, at the 'Travellers'.'

His son has taken his father's seat in Parliament, and has of course joined Young England. He is the only man in the country who believes in the De Mogynses, and sighs for the days when a De Mogyns led the van of battle. He has written a little volume of spoony puny poems. He wears a lock of the hair of Laud, the Confessor and Martyr, and fainted when he kissed the Pope's toe at Rome. He sleeps in white kid-gloves, and commits dangerous excesses upon green tea.

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1842. Henry David **THOREAU**. (1817-1862)

(extract) **On Civil Disobedience**. written 1849.

I heartily accept the motto, "That government is best which governs least"; and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe – „That government is best which governs not at all"; and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have. Government is at best but an expedient; but most governments are usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient. The objections which have been brought against a standing army, and they are many and weighty, and deserve to prevail, may also at last be brought against a standing government. The standing army is only an arm of the standing government. The government itself, which is only the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will, is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it. Witness the present Mexican war, the work of comparatively a few individuals using the standing government as their tool; for in the outset, the people would not have consented to this measure.

This American government – what is it but a tradition, though a recent one, endeavouring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity, but each instant losing some of its integrity? It has not the vitality and force of a single living man; for a single man can bend it to his will. It is a sort of wooden gun to the people themselves. But it is not the less necessary for this; for the people must have some complicated machinery or other, and hear its din, to satisfy that idea of government which they have. Governments show thus how successfully men can be imposed upon, even impose on themselves, for their own advantage. It is excellent, we must all allow. Yet

this government never of itself furthered any enterprise, but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way. It does not keep the country free. It does not settle the West. It does not educate. The character inherent in the American people has done all that has been accomplished; and it would have done somewhat more, if the government had not sometimes got in its way. For government is an expedient, by which men would fain succeed in letting one another alone; and, as has been said, when it is most expedient, the governed are most let alone by it. Trade and commerce, if they were not made of india-rubber, would never manage to bounce over obstacles which legislators are continually putting in their way; and if one were to judge these men wholly by the effects of their actions and not partly by their intentions, they would deserve to be classed and punished with those mischievious persons who put obstructions on the railroads.

But, to speak practically and as a citizen, unlike those who call themselves no-government men, I ask for, not at once no government, but at once a better government. Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it.

After all, the practical reason why, when the power is once in the hands of the people, a majority are permitted, and for a long period continue, to rule, is not because they are most likely to be in the right, nor because this seems fairest to the minority, but because they are physically the strongest. But a government in which the majority rule in all cases can not be based on justice, even as far as men understand it. Can there not be a government in which the majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience? – in which majorities decide only those questions to which the rule of expediency is applicable? Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right. It is truly enough said that a corporation has no conscience; but a

corporation on conscientious men is a corporation with a conscience. Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents on injustice. A common and natural result of an undue respect for the law is, that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys, and all, marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills, ay, against their common sense and consciences, which makes it very steep marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart. They have no doubt that it is a damnable business in which they are concerned; they are all peaceably inclined. Now, what are they? Men at all? or small movable forts and magazines, at the service of some unscrupulous man in power? Visit the Navy Yard, and behold a marine, such a man as an American government can make, or such as it can make a man with its black arts – a mere shadow and reminiscence of humanity, a man laid out alive and standing, and already, as one may say, buried under arms with funeral accompaniment, though it may be,

> "Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
> As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
> Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
> O'er the grave where out hero was buried."

The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. They are the standing army, and the militia, jailers, constables, posse comitatus, etc. In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgement or of the moral sense; but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones; and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well. Such command no more respect than men of straw or a lump of dirt. They have the same sort of worth only as horses and dogs. Yet such as these even are commonly esteemed good citizens. Others – as most legislators, politicians, lawyers, ministers, and office-holders – serve the state chiefly with their heads; and,

as the rarely make any moral distinctions, they are as likely to serve the devil, without intending it, as God. A very few – as heroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers in the great sense, and men – serve the state with their consciences also, and so necessarily resist it for the most part; and they are commonly treated as enemies by it. A wise man will only be useful as a man, and will not submit to be "clay," and "stop a hole to keep the wind away," but leave that office to his dust at least:

"I am too high born to be propertied,
To be a second at control,
Or useful serving-man and instrument
To any sovereign state throughout the world."

He who gives himself entirely to his fellow men appears to them useless and selfish; but he who gives himself partially to them is pronounced a benefactor and philanthropist.

How does it become a man to behave toward the American government today? I answer, that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it. I cannot for an instant recognise that political organization as my government which is the slave's government also.

All men recognise the right of revolution; that is, the right to refuse allegiance to, and to resist, the government, when its tyranny or its inefficiency are great and unendurable. But almost all say that such is not the case now. But such was the case, they think, in the Revolution of '75. If one were to tell me that this was a bad government because it taxed certain foreign commodities brought to its ports, it is most probable that I should not make an ado about it, for I can do without them. All machines have their friction; and possibly this does enough good to counter-balance the evil. At any rate, it is a great evil to make a stir about it. But when the friction comes to have its machine, and oppression and robbery are organised, I say, let us not have such a machine any longer. In other words, when a sixth of the population

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of a nation which has undertaken to be the refuge of liberty are slaves, and a whole country is unjustly overrun and conquered by a foreign army, and subjected to military law, I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionise. What makes this duty the more urgent is that fact that the country so overrun is not our own, but ours is the invading army.

Paley, a common authority with many on moral questions, in his chapter on the "Duty of Submission to Civil Government," resolves all civil obligation into expediency; and he proceeds to say that "so long as the interest of the whole society requires it, that it, so long as the established government cannot be resisted or changed without public inconveniencey, it is the will of God... that the established government be obeyed – and no longer. This principle being admitted, the justice of every particular case of resistance is reduced to a computation of the quantity of the danger and grievance on the one side, and of the probability and expense of redressing it on the other." Of this, he says, every man shall judge for himself. But Paley appears never to have contemplated those cases to which the rule of expediency does not apply, in which a people, as well and an individual, must do justice, cost what it may. If I have unjustly wrested a plank from a drowning man, I must restore it to him though I drown myself. This, according to Paley, would be inconvenient. But he that would save his life, in such a case, shall lose it. This people must cease to hold slaves, and to make war on Mexico, though it cost them their existence as a people.

In their practice, nations agree with Paley; but does anyone think that Massachusetts does exactly what is right at the present crisis?

"A drab of stat,
a cloth-o'-silver slut,
To have her train borne up,
and her soul trail in the dirt."

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Practically speaking, the opponents to a reform in Massachusetts are not a hundred thousand politicians at the South, but a hundred thousand merchants and farmers here, who are more interested in commerce and agriculture than they are in humanity, and are not prepared to do justice to the slave and to Mexico, cost what it may. I quarrel not with far-off foes, but with those who, neat at home, co-operate with, and do the bidding of, those far away, and without whom the latter would be harmless. We are accustomed to say, that the mass of men are unprepared; but improvement is slow, because the few are not as materially wiser or better than the many. It is not so important that many should be good as you, as that there be some absolute goodness somewhere; for that will leaven the whole lump. There are thousands who are in opinion opposed to slavery and to the war, who yet in effect do nothing to put an end to them; who, esteeming themselves children of Washington and Franklin, sit down with their hands in their pockets, and say that they know not what to do, and do nothing; who even postpone the question of freedom to the question of free trade, and quietly read the prices-current along with the latest advices from Mexico, after dinner, and, it may be, fall asleep over them both. What is the price-current of an honest man and patriot today? They hesitate, and they regret, and sometimes they petition; but they do nothing in earnest and with effect. They will wait, well disposed, for other to remedy the evil, that they may no longer have it to regret. At most, they give up only a cheap vote, and a feeble countenance and Godspeed, to the right, as it goes by them. There are nine hundred and ninety-nine patrons of virtue to one virtuous man. But it is easier to deal with the real possessor of a thing than with the temporary guardian of it.

All voting is a sort of gaming, like checkers or backgammon, with a slight moral tinge to it, a playing with right and wrong, with moral questions; and betting naturally accompanies it. The character of the voters is not staked. I cast my vote, perchance, as I think right; but I am not vitally concerned that that right should prevail. I am willing to leave it to the majority. Its obligation, therefore, never exceeds that of expediency. Even voting for the right is doing nothing for it. It is only

expressing to men feebly your desire that it should prevail. A wise man will not leave the right to the mercy of chance, nor wish it to prevail through the power of the majority. There is but little virtue in the action of masses of men. When the majority shall at length vote for the abolition of slavery, it will be because they are indifferent to slavery, or because there is but little slavery left to be abolished by their vote. They will then be the only slaves. Only his vote can hasten the abolition of slavery who asserts his own freedom by his vote.

I hear of a convention to be held at Baltimore, or elsewhere, for the selection of a candidate for the Presidency, made up chiefly of editors, and men who are politicians by profession; but I think, what is it to any independent, intelligent, and respectable man what decision they may come to? Shall we not have the advantage of this wisdom and honesty, nevertheless? Can we not count upon some independent votes? Are there not many individuals in the country who do not attend conventions? But no: I find that the respectable man, so called, has immediately drifted from his position, and despairs of his country, when his country has more reasons to despair of him. He forthwith adopts one of the candidates thus selected as the only available one, thus proving that he is himself available for any purposes of the demagogue. His vote is of no more worth than that of any unprincipled foreigner or hireling native, who may have been bought. O for a man who is a man, and, and my neighbour says, has a bone is his back which you cannot pass your hand through! Our statistics are at fault: the population has been returned too large. How many men are there to a square thousand miles in the country? Hardly one. Does not America offer any inducement for men to settle here? The American has dwindled into an Odd Fellow – one who may be known by the development of his organ of gregariousness, and a manifest lack of intellect and cheerful self-reliance; whose first and chief concern, on coming into the world, is to see that the almshouses are in good repair; and, before yet he has lawfully donned the virile garb, to collect a fund to the support of the widows and orphans that may

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be; who, in short, ventures to live only by the aid of the Mutual Insurance company, which has promised to bury him decently.

It is not a man's duty, as a matter of course, to devote himself to the eradication of any, even to most enormous, wrong; he may still properly have other concerns to engage him; but it is his duty, at least, to wash his hands of it, and, if he gives it no thought longer, not to give it practically his support. If I devote myself to other pursuits and contemplations, I must first see, at least, that I do not pursue them sitting upon another man's shoulders. I must get off him first, that he may pursue his contemplations too. See what gross inconsistency is tolerated. I have heard some of my townsmen say, "I should like to have them order me out to help put down an insurrection of the slaves, or to march to Mexico – see if I would go"; and yet these very men have each, directly by their allegiance, and so indirectly, at least, by their money, furnished a substitute. The soldier is applauded who refuses to serve in an unjust war by those who do not refuse to sustain the unjust government which makes the war; is applauded by those whose own act and authority he disregards and sets at naught; as if the state were penitent to that degree that it hired one to scourge it while it sinned, but not to that degree that it left off sinning for a moment. Thus, under the name of Order and Civil Government, we are all made at last to pay homage to and support our own meanness. After the first blush of sin comes its indifference; and from immoral it becomes, as it were, unmoral, and not quite unnecessary to that life which we have made.

The broadest and most prevalent error requires the most disinterested virtue to sustain it. The slight reproach to which the virtue of patriotism is commonly liable, the noble are most likely to incur. Those who, while they disapprove of the character and measures of a government, yield to it their allegiance and support are undoubtedly its most conscientious supporters, and so frequently the most serious obstacles to reform. Some are petitioning the State to dissolve the Union, to disregard the requisitions of the President. Why do they not dissolve it themselves – the union between themselves and the State – and refuse to pay their quota into its

treasury? Do not they stand in same relation to the State that the State does to the Union? And have not the same reasons prevented the State from resisting the Union which have prevented them from resisting the State?

How can a man be satisfied to entertain and opinion merely, and enjoy it? Is there any enjoyment in it, if his opinion is that he is aggrieved? If you are cheated out of a single dollar by your neighbour, you do not rest satisfied with knowing you are cheated, or with saying that you are cheated, or even with petitioning him to pay you your due; but you take effectual steps at once to obtain the full amount, and see to it that you are never cheated again. Action from principle, the perception and the performance of right, changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary, and does not consist wholly with anything which was. It not only divided States and churches, it divides families; ay, it divides the individual, separating the diabolical in him from the divine.

Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavour to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? Men, generally, under such a government as this, think that they ought to wait until they have persuaded the majority to alter them. They think that, if they should resist, the remedy would be worse than the evil. But it is the fault of the government itself that the remedy is worse than the evil. It makes it worse. Why is it not more apt to anticipate and provide for reform? Why does it not cherish its wise minority? Why does it cry and resist before it is hurt? Why does it not encourage its citizens to put out its faults, and do better than it would have them? Why does it always crucify Christ and excommunicate Copernicus and Luther, and pronounce Washington and Franklin rebels?

One would think, that a deliberate and practical denial of its authority was the only offence never contemplated by its government; else, why has it not assigned its definite, its suitable and proportionate, penalty? If a man who has no property refuses but once to earn nine shillings for the State, he is put in prison for a period unlimited by any law that I know, and determined only by the discretion of those

who put him there; but if he should steal ninety times nine shillings from the State, he is soon permitted to go at large again.

If the injustice is part of the necessary friction of the machine of government, let it go, let it go: perchance it will wear smooth – certainly the machine will wear out. If the injustice has a spring, or a pulley, or a rope, or a crank, exclusively for itself, then perhaps you may consider whether the remedy will not be worse than the evil; but if it is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter-friction to stop the machine. What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn.

As for adopting the ways of the State has provided for remedying the evil, I know not of such ways. They take too much time, and a man's life will be gone. I have other affairs to attend to. I came into this world, not chiefly to make this a good place to live in, but to live in it, be it good or bad. A man has not everything to do, but something; and because he cannot do everything, it is not necessary that he should be petitioning the Governor or the Legislature any more than it is theirs to petition me; and if they should not hear my petition, what should I do then? But in this case the State has provided no way: its very Constitution is the evil. This may seem to be harsh and stubborn and unconcilliatory; but it is to treat with the utmost kindness and consideration the only spirit that can appreciate or deserves it. So is all change for the better, like birth and death, which convulse the body.

I do not hesitate to say, that those who call themselves Abolitionists should at once effectually withdraw their support, both in person and property, from the government of Massachusetts, and not wait till they constitute a majority of one, before they suffer the right to prevail through them. I think that it is enough if they have God on their side, without waiting for that other one. Moreover, any man more right than his neighbours constitutes a majority of one already.

I meet this American government, or its representative, the State government, directly, and face to face, once a year – no more – in the person of its tax-gatherer;

this is the only mode in which a man situated as I am necessarily meets it; and it then says distinctly, Recognise me; and the simplest, the most effectual, and, in the present posture of affairs, the indispensablest mode of treating with it on this head, of expressing your little satisfaction with and love for it, is to deny it then. My civil neighbour, the tax-gatherer, is the very man I have to deal with – for it is, after all, with men and not with parchment that I quarrel – and he has voluntarily chosen to be an agent of the government. How shall he ever know well that he is and does as an officer of the government, or as a man, until he is obliged to consider whether he will treat me, his neighbour, for whom he has respect, as a neighbour and well-disposed man, or as a maniac and disturber of the peace, and see if he can get over this obstruction to his neighbourlines without a ruder and more impetuous thought or speech corresponding with his action. I know this well, that if one thousand, if one hundred, if ten men whom I could name – if ten honest men only – ay, if one HONEST man, in this State of Massachusetts, ceasing to hold slaves, were actually to withdraw from this co-partnership, and be locked up in the county jail therefor, it would be the abolition of slavery in America. For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be: what is once well done is done forever. But we love better to talk about it: that we say is our mission. Reform keeps many scores of newspapers in its service, but not one man. If my esteemed neighbour, the State's ambassador, who will devote his days to the settlement of the question of human rights in the Council Chamber, instead of being threatened with the prisons of Carolina, were to sit down the prisoner of Massachusetts, that State which is so anxious to foist the sin of slavery upon her sister – though at present she can discover only an act of inhospitality to be the ground of a quarrel with her – the Legislature would not wholly waive the subject of the following winter.

Under a government which imprisons unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison. The proper place today, the only place which Massachusetts has provided for her freer and less despondent spirits, is in her prisons, to be put out and locked out of the State by her own act, as they have already put themselves out

by their principles. It is there that the fugitive slave, and the Mexican prisoner on parole, and the Indian come to plead the wrongs of his race should find them; on that separate but more free and honourable ground, where the State places those who are not with her, but against her – the only house in a slave State in which a free man can abide with honour. If any think that their influence would be lost there, and their voices no longer afflict the ear of the State, that they would not be as an enemy within its walls, they do not know by how much truth is stronger than error, nor how much more eloquently and effectively he can combat injustice who has experienced a little in his own person. Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence. A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; it is not even a minority then; but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight. If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose. If a thousand men were not to pay their tax bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood. This is, in fact, the definition of a peaceable revolution, if any such is possible. If the tax-gatherer, or any other public officer, asks me, as one has done, "But what shall I do?" my answer is, "If you really wish to do anything, resign your office." When the subject has refused allegiance, and the officer has resigned from office, then the revolution is accomplished. But even suppose blood shed when the conscience is wounded? Through this wound a man's real manhood and immortality flow out, and he bleeds to an everlasting death. I see this blood flowing now.

I have contemplated the imprisonment of the offender, rather than the seizure of his goods – though both will serve the same purpose – because they who assert the purest right, and consequently are most dangerous to a corrupt State, commonly have not spent much time in accumulating property. To such the State renders comparatively small service, and a slight tax is wont to appear exorbitant, particularly if they are obliged to earn it by special labour with their hands. If there were one who lived wholly without the use of money, the State itself would hesitate

to demand it of him. But the rich man – not to make any invidious comparison – is always sold to the institution which makes him rich. Absolutely speaking, the more money, the less virtue; for money comes between a man and his objects, and obtains them for him; it was certainly no great virtue to obtain it. It puts to rest many questions which he would otherwise be taxed to answer; while the only new question which it puts is the hard but superfluous one, how to spend it. Thus his moral ground is taken from under his feet. The opportunities of living are diminished in proportion as that are called the "means" are increased. The best thing a man can do for his culture when he is rich is to endeavour to carry out those schemes which he entertained when he was poor. Christ answered the Herodians according to their condition. "Show me the tribute-money," said he – and one took a penny out of his pocket – if you use money which has the image of Caesar on it, and which he has made current and valuable, that is, if you are men of the State, and gladly enjoy the advantages of Caesar's government, then pay him back some of his own when he demands it. "Render therefore to Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God those things which are God's" – leaving them no wiser than before as to which was which; for they did not wish to know.

When I converse with the freest of my neighbours, I perceive that, whatever they may say about the magnitude and seriousness of the question, and their regard for the public tranquillity, the long and the short of the matter is, that they cannot spare the protection of the existing government, and they dread the consequences to their property and families of disobedience to it. For my own part, I should not like to think that I ever rely on the protection of the State. But, if I deny the authority of the State when it presents its tax bill, it will soon take and waste all my property, and so harass me and my children without end. This is hard. This makes it impossible for a man to live honestly, and at the same time comfortably, in outward respects. It will not be worth the while to accumulate property; that would be sure to go again. You must hire or squat somewhere, and raise but a small crop, and eat that soon. You must live within yourself, and depend upon yourself always tucked up and ready

for a start, and not have many affairs. A man may grow rich in Turkey even, if he will be in all respects a good subject of the Turkish government. Confucius said: “If a state is governed by the principles of reason, poverty and misery are subjects of shame; if a state is not governed by the principles of reason, riches and honours are subjects of shame.” No: until I want the protection of Massachusetts to be extended to me in some distant Southern port, where my liberty is endangered, or until I am bent solely on building up an estate at home by peaceful enterprise, I can afford to refuse allegiance to Massachusetts, and her right to my property and life. It costs me less in every sense to incur the penalty of disobedience to the State than it would to obey. I should feel as if I were worth less in that case.

Some years ago, the State met me in behalf of the Church, and commanded me to pay a certain sum toward the support of a clergyman whose preaching my father attended, but never I myself. “Pay,” it said, “or be locked up in the jail.” I declined to pay. But, unfortunately, another man saw fit to pay it. I did not see why the schoolmaster should be taxed to support the priest, and not the priest the schoolmaster; for I was not the State’s schoolmaster, but I supported myself by voluntary subscription. I did not see why the lyceum should not present its tax bill, and have the State to back its demand, as well as the Church. However, as the request of the selectmen, I condescended to make some such statement as this in writing: “Know all men by these presents, that I, Henry Thoreau, do not wish to be regarded as a member of any society which I have not joined.” This I gave to the town clerk; and he has it. The State, having thus learned that I did not wish to be regarded as a member of that church, has never made a like demand on me since; though it said that it must adhere to its original presumption that time. If I had known how to name them, I should then have signed off in detail from all the societies which I never signed on to; but I did not know where to find such a complete list.

I have paid no poll tax for six years. I was put into a jail once on this account, for one night; and, as I stood considering the walls of solid stone, two or three feet

thick, the door of wood and iron, a foot thick, and the iron grating which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated my as if I were mere flesh and blood and bones, to be locked up. I wondered that it should have concluded at length that this was the best use it could put me to, and had never thought to avail itself of my services in some way. I saw that, if there was a wall of stone between me and my townsmen, there was a still more difficult one to climb or break through before they could get to be as free as I was. I did nor for a moment feel confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar. I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax. They plainly did not know how to treat me, but behaved like persons who are underbred. In every threat and in every compliment there was a blunder; for they thought that my chief desire was to stand the other side of that stone wall. I could not but smile to see how industriously they locked the door on my meditations, which followed them out again without let or hindrance, and they were really all that was dangerous. As they could not reach me, they had resolved to punish my body; just as boys, if they cannot come at some person against whom they have a spite, will abuse his dog. I saw that the State was half-witted, that it was timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons, and that it did not know its friends from its foes, and I lost all my remaining respect for it, and pitied it.

Thus the state never intentionally confronts a man's sense, intellectual or moral, but only his body, his senses. It is not armed with superior wit or honesty, but with superior physical strength. I was not born to be forced. I will breathe after my own fashion. Let us see who is the strongest. What force has a multitude? They only can force me who obey a higher law than I. They force me to become like themselves. I do not hear of men being forced to live this way or that by masses of men. What sort of life were that to live? When I meet a government which says to me, "Your money our your life," why should I be in haste to give it my money? It may be in a great strait, and not know what to do: I cannot help that. It must help itself; do as I do. It is not worth the while to snivel about it. I am not responsible for the successful

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working of the machinery of society. I am not the son of the engineer. I perceive that, when an acorn and a chestnut fall side by side, the one does not remain inert to make way for the other, but both obey their own laws, and spring and grow and flourish as best they can, till one, perchance, overshadows and destroys the other. If a plant cannot live according to nature, it dies; and so a man.

The night in prison was novel and interesting enough. The prisoners in their shirtsleeves were enjoying a chat and the evening air in the doorway, when I entered. But the jailer said, "Come, boys, it is time to lock up"; and so they dispersed, and I heard the sound of their steps returning into the hollow apartments. My room-mate was introduced to me by the jailer as "a first-rate fellow and clever man." When the door was locked, he showed me where to hang my hat, and how he managed matters there. The rooms were whitewashed once a month; and this one, at least, was the whitest, most simply furnished, and probably neatest apartment in town. He naturally wanted to know where I came from, and what brought me there; and, when I had told him, I asked him in my turn how he came there, presuming him to be an honest an, of course; and as the world goes, I believe he was. "Why," said he, "they accuse me of burning a barn; but I never did it." As near as I could discover, he had probably gone to bed in a barn when drunk, and smoked his pipe there; and so a barn was burnt. He had the reputation of being a clever man, had been there some three months waiting for his trial to come on, and would have to wait as much longer; but he was quite domesticated and contented, since he got his board for nothing, and thought that he was well treated.

He occupied one window, and I the other; and I saw that if one stayed there long, his principal business would be to look out the window. I had soon read all the tracts that were left there, and examined where former prisoners had broken out, and where a grate had been sawed off, and heard the history of the various occupants of that room; for I found that even there there was a history and a gossip which never circulated beyond the walls of the jail. Probably this is the only house in the town where verses are composed, which are afterward printed in a circular form,

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but not published. I was shown quite a long list of young men who had been detected in an attempt to escape, who avenged themselves by singing them.

I pumped my fellow-prisoner as dry as I could, for fear I should never see him again; but at length he showed me which was my bed, and left me to blow out the lamp.

It was like travelling into a far country, such as I had never expected to behold, to lie there for one night. It seemed to me that I never had heard the town clock strike before, not the evening sounds of the village; for we slept with the windows open, which were inside the grating. It was to see my native village in the light of the Middle Ages, and our Concord was turned into a Rhine stream, and visions of knights and castles passed before me. They were the voices of old burghers that I heard in the streets. I was an involuntary spectator and auditor of whatever was done and said in the kitchen of the adjacent village inn – a wholly new and rare experience to me. It was a closer view of my native town. I was fairly inside of it. I never had seen its institutions before. This is one of its peculiar institutions; for it is a shire town. I began to comprehend what its inhabitants were about.

In the morning, our breakfasts were put through the hole in the door, in small oblong-square tin pans, made to fit, and holding a pint of chocolate, with brown bread, and an iron spoon. When they called for the vessels again, I was green enough to return what bread I had left, but my comrade seized it, and said that I should lay that up for lunch or dinner. Soon after he was let out to work at haying in a neighbouring field, whither he went every day, and would not be back till noon; so he bade me good day, saying that he doubted if he should see me again.

When I came out of prison – for some one interfered, and paid that tax – I did not perceive that great changes had taken place on the common, such as he observed who went in a youth and emerged a gray-headed man; and yet a change had come to my eyes come over the scene – the town, and State, and country, greater than any that mere time could effect. I saw yet more distinctly the State in which I lived. I saw to what extent the people among whom I lived could be trusted as good neighbours

and friends; that their friendship was for summer weather only; that they did not greatly propose to do right; that they were a distinct race from me by their prejudices and superstitions, as the Chinamen and Malays are that in their sacrifices to humanity they ran no risks, not even to their property; that after all they were not so noble but they treated the thief as he had treated them, and hoped, by a certain outward observance and a few prayers, and by walking in a particular straight through useless path from time to time, to save their souls. This may be to judge my neighbours harshly; for I believe that many of them are not aware that they have such an institution as the jail in their village.

It was formerly the custom in our village, when a poor debtor came out of jail, for his acquaintances to salute him, looking through their fingers, which were crossed to represent the jail window, "How do ye do?" My neighbours did not this salute me, but first looked at me, and then at one another, as if I had returned from a long journey. I was put into jail as I was going to the shoemaker's to get a shoe which was mender. When I was let out the next morning, I proceeded to finish my errand, and, having put on my mended show, joined a huckleberry party, who were impatient to put themselves under my conduct; and in half an hour – for the horse was soon tackled – was in the midst of a huckleberry field, on one of our highest hills, two miles off, and then the State was nowhere to be seen.

This is the whole history of "My Prisons."

I have never declined paying the highway tax, because I am as desirous of being a good neighbour as I am of being a bad subject; and as for supporting schools, I am doing my part to educate my fellow countrymen now. It is for no particular item in the tax bill that I refuse to pay it. I simply wish to refuse allegiance to the State, to withdraw and stand aloof from it effectually. I do not care to trace the course of my dollar, if I could, till it buys a man a musket to shoot one with – the dollar is innocent – but I am concerned to trace the effects of my allegiance. In fact, I quietly declare war with the State, after my fashion, though I will still make use and get what advantages of her I can, as is usual in such cases.

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If others pay the tax which is demanded of me, from a sympathy with the State, they do but what they have already done in their own case, or rather they abet injustice to a greater extent than the State requires. If they pay the tax from a mistaken interest in the individual taxed, to save his property, or prevent his going to jail, it is because they have not considered wisely how far they let their private feelings interfere with the public good.

This, then is my position at present. But one cannot be too much on his guard in such a case, lest his actions be biased by obstinacy or an undue regard for the opinions of men. Let him see that he does only what belongs to himself and to the hour.

I think sometimes, Why, this people mean well, they are only ignorant; they would do better if they knew how: why give your neighbours this pain to treat you as they are not inclined to? But I think again, This is no reason why I should do as they do, or permit others to suffer much greater pain of a different kind. Again, I sometimes say to myself, When many millions of men, without heat, without ill will, without personal feelings of any kind, demand of you a few shillings only, without the possibility, such is their constitution, of retracting or altering their present demand, and without the possibility, on your side, of appeal to any other millions, why expose yourself to this overwhelming brute force? You do not resist cold and hunger, the winds and the waves, thus obstinately; you quietly submit to a thousand similar necessities. You do not put your head into the fire. But just in proportion as I regard this as not wholly a brute force, but partly a human force, and consider that I have relations to those millions as to so many millions of men, and not of mere brute or inanimate things, I see that appeal is possible, first and instantaneously, from them to the Maker of them, and, secondly, from them to themselves. But if I put my head deliberately into the fire, there is no appeal to fire or to the Maker for fire, and I have only myself to blame. If I could convince myself that I have any right to be satisfied with men as they are, and to treat them accordingly, and not according, in some respects, to my requisitions and expectations of what they and I ought to be,

then, like a good Mussulman and fatalist, I should endeavour to be satisfied with things as they are, and say it is the will of God. And, above all, there is this difference between resisting this and a purely brute or natural force, that I can resist this with some effect; but I cannot expect, like Orpheus, to change the nature of the rocks and trees and beasts.

I do not wish to quarrel with any man or nation. I do not wish to split hairs, to make fine distinctions, or set myself up as better than my neighbours. I seek rather, I may say, even an excuse for conforming to the laws of the land. I am but too ready to conform to them. Indeed, I have reason to suspect myself on this head; and each year, as the tax-gatherer comes round, I find myself disposed to review the acts and position of the general and State governments, and the spirit of the people to discover a pretext for conformity.

> "We must affect our country as our parents,
> And if at any time we alienate
> Out love or industry from doing it honour,
> We must respect effects and teach the soul
> Matter of conscience and religion,
> And not desire of rule or benefit."

I believe that the State will soon be able to take all my work of this sort out of my hands, and then I shall be no better patriot than my fellow-countrymen. Seen from a lower point of view, the Constitution, with all its faults, is very good; the law and the courts are very respectable; even this State and this American government are, in many respects, very admirable, and rare things, to be thankful for, such as a great many have described them; seen from a higher still, and the highest, who shall say what they are, or that they are worth looking at or thinking of at all?

However, the government does not concern me much, and I shall bestow the fewest possible thoughts on it. It is not many moments that I live under a

government, even in this world. If a man is thought-free, fancy-free, imagination-free, that which is *not* never for a long time appearing *to be* to him, unwise rulers or reformers cannot fatally interrupt him.

I know that most men think differently from myself; but those whose lives are by profession devoted to the study of these or kindred subjects content me as little as any. Statesmen and legislators, standing so completely within the institution, never distinctly and nakedly behold it. They speak of moving society, but have no resting-place without it. They may be men of a certain experience and discrimination, and have no doubt invented ingenious and even useful systems, for which we sincerely thank them; but all their wit and usefulness lie within certain not very wide limits. They are wont to forget that the world is not governed by policy and expediency. Webster never goes behind government, and so cannot speak with authority about it. His words are wisdom to those legislators who contemplate no essential reform in the existing government; but for thinkers, and those who legislate for all tim, he never once glances at the subject. I know of those whose serene and wise speculations on this theme would soon reveal the limits of his mind's range and hospitality. Yet, compared with the cheap professions of most reformers, and the still cheaper wisdom an eloquence of politicians in general, his are almost the only sensible and valuable words, and we thank Heaven for him. Comparatively, he is always strong, original, and, above all, practical. Still, his quality is not wisdom, but prudence. The lawyer's truth is not Truth, but consistency or a consistent expediency. Truth is always in harmony with herself, and is not concerned chiefly to reveal the justice that may consist with wrong-doing. He well deserves to be called, as he has been called, the Defender of the Constitution. There are really no blows to be given him but defensive ones. He is not a leader, but a follower. His leaders are the men of '87. "I have never made an effort," he says, "and never propose to make an effort; I have never countenanced an effort, and never mean to countenance an effort, to disturb the arrangement as originally made, by which various States came into the Union." Still thinking of the sanction which the Constitution gives to

slavery, he says, "Because it was part of the original compact – let it stand." Notwithstanding his special acuteness and ability, he is unable to take a fact out of its merely political relations, and behold it as it lies absolutely to be disposed of by the intellect – what, for instance, it behooves a man to do here in American today with regard to slavery – but ventures, or is driven, to make some such desperate answer to the following, while professing to speak absolutely, and as a private man – from which what new and singular of social duties might be inferred? "The manner," says he, "in which the governments of the States where slavery exists are to regulate it is for their own consideration, under the responsibility to their constituents, to the general laws of propriety, humanity, and justice, and to God. Associations formed elsewhere, springing from a feeling of humanity, or any other cause, have nothing whatever to do with it. They have never received any encouragement from me and they never will."

They who know of no purer sources of truth, who have traced up its stream no higher, stand, and wisely stand, by the Bible and the Constitution, and drink at it there with reverence and humanity; but they who behold where it comes trickling into this lake or that pool, gird up their loins once more, and continue their pilgrimage toward its fountainhead.

No man with a genius for legislation has appeared in America. They are rare in the history of the world. There are orators, politicians, and eloquent men, by the thousand; but the speaker has not yet opened his mouth to speak who is capable of settling the much-vexed questions of the day. We love eloquence for its own sake, and not for any truth which it may utter, or any heroism it may inspire. Our legislators have not yet learned the comparative value of free-trade and of freedom, of union, and of rectitude, to a nation. They have no genius or talent for comparatively humble questions of taxation and finance, commerce and manufactures and agriculture. If we were left solely to the wordy wit of legislators in Congress for our guidance, uncorrected by the seasonable experience and the effectual complaints of the people, America would not long retain her rank among

the nations. For eighteen hundred years, though perchance I have no right to say it, the New Testament has been written; yet where is the legislator who has wisdom and practical talent enough to avail himself of the light which it sheds on the science of legislation.

The authority of government, even such as I am willing to submit to – for I will cheerfully obey those who know and can do better than I, and in many things even those who neither know nor can do so well – is still an impure one: to be strictly just, it must have the sanction and consent of the governed. It can have no pure right over my person and property but what I concede to it. The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual. Even the Chinese philosopher was wise enough to regard the individual as the basis of the empire. Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognise the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly. I please myself with imagining a State at last which can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbour; which even would not think it inconsistent with its own repose if a few were to live aloof from it, not meddling with it, nor embraced by it, who fulfilled all the duties of neighbours and fellow men. A State which bore this kind of fruit, and suffered it to drop off as fast as it ripened, would prepare the way for a still more perfect and glorious State, which I have also imagined, but not yet anywhere seen.

1844. George **ELIOT**. (1819-1880)

(extract) ***Daniel Deronda***. written 1876.

Chapter 42 (final excerpt).

"Say, rather, he does not share that spirit," said Mordecai, who had turned a melancholy glance on Pash. "Unless nationality is a feeling, what force can it have as an idea?"

"Granted, Mordecai," said Pash, quite good-humouredly. "And as the feeling of nationality is dying, I take the idea to be no better than a ghost, already walking to announce the death."

"A sentiment may seem to be dying and yet revive into strong life," said Deronda. "Nations have revived. We may live to see a great outburst of force in the Arabs, who are being inspired with a new zeal."

"Amen, amen," said Mordecai, looking at Deronda with a delight which was the beginning of recovered energy: his attitude was more upright, his face was less worn.

"That may hold with backward nations," said Pash, "but with us in Europe the sentiment of nationality is destined to die out. It will last a little longer in the quarters where oppression lasts, but nowhere else. The whole current of progress is setting against it."

"Ay," said Buchan, in a rapid thin Scotch tone which was like the letting in of a little cool air on the conversation, "ye've done well to bring us round to the point. Ye're all agreed that societies change—not always and everywhere—but on the whole and in the long run. Now, with all deference, I would beg t' observe that we have got to examine the nature of changes before we have a warrant to call them progress, which word is supposed to include a bettering, though I apprehend it to be

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ill-chosen for that purpose, since mere motion onward may carry us to a bog or a precipice. And the questions I would put are three: Is all change in the direction of progress? if not, how shall we discern which change is progress and which not? and thirdly, how far and in what way can we act upon the course of change so as to promote it where it is beneficial, and divert it where it is injurious?"

But Buchan's attempt to impose his method on the talk was a failure. Lily immediately said—

"Change and progress are merged in the idea of development. The laws of development are being discovered, and changes taking place according to them are necessarily progressive; that is to say, if we have any notion of progress or improvement opposed to them, the notion is a mistake."

"I really can't see how you arrive at that sort of certitude about changes by calling them development," said Deronda. "There will still remain the degrees of inevitableness in relation to our own will and acts, and the degrees of wisdom in hastening or retarding; there will still remain the danger of mistaking a tendency which should be resisted for an inevitable law that we must adjust ourselves to,—which seems to me as bad a superstition or false god as any that has been set up without the ceremonies of philosophising."

"That is a truth," said Mordecai. "Woe to the men who see no place for resistance in this generation! I believe in a growth, a passage, and a new unfolding of life whereof the seed is more perfect, more charged with the elements that are pregnant with diviner form. The life of a people grows, it is knit together and yet expanded, in joy and sorrow, in thought and action; it absorbs the thought of other nations into its own forms, and gives back the thought as new wealth to the world; it is a power and an organ in the great body of the nations. But there may come a check, an arrest; memories may be stifled, and love may be faint for the lack of them; or memories may shrink into withered relics—the soul of a people, whereby they know themselves to be one, may seem to be dying for want of common action. But who shall say, 'The fountain of their life is dried up, they shall forever cease to be a

nation?' Who shall say it? Not he who feels the life of his people stirring within his own. Shall he say, 'That way events are wending, I will not resist?' His very soul is resistance, and is as a seed of fire that may enkindle the souls of multitudes, and make a new pathway for events."

"I don't deny patriotism," said Gideon, "but we all know you have a particular meaning, Mordecai. You know Mordecai's way of thinking, I suppose." Here Gideon had turned to Deronda, who sat next to him, but without waiting for an answer he went on. „I'm a rational Jew myself. I stand by my people as a sort of family relation, and I am for keeping up our worship in a rational way. I don't approve of our people getting baptised, because I don't believe in a Jew's conversion to the Gentile part of Christianity. And now we have political equality, there's no excuse for a pretence of that sort. But I am for getting rid of all of our superstitions and exclusiveness. There's no reason now why we shouldn't melt gradually into the populations we live among. That's the order of the day in point of progress. I would as soon my children married Christians as Jews. And I'm for the old maxim, 'A man's country is where he's well off.'„

"That country's not so easy to find, Gideon," said the rapid Pash, with a shrug and grimace. "You get ten shillings a-week more than I do, and have only half the number of children. If somebody will introduce a brisk trade in watches among the 'Jerusalem wares,' I'll go—eh, Mordecai, what do you say?"

Deronda, all ear for these hints of Mordecai's opinion, was inwardly wondering at his persistence in coming to this club. For an enthusiastic spirit to meet continually the fixed indifference of men familiar with the object of his enthusiasm is the acceptance of a slow martyrdom, beside which the fate of a missionary tomahawked without any considerate rejection of his doctrines seems hardly worthy of compassion. But Mordecai gave no sign of shrinking: this was a moment of spiritual fullness, and he cared more for the utterance of his faith than for its immediate reception. With a fervor which had no temper in it, but seemed rather the rush of feeling in the opportunity of speech, he answered Pash:—

"What I say is, let every man keep far away from the brotherhood and inheritance he despises. Thousands on thousands of our race have mixed with the Gentiles as Celt with Saxon, and they may inherit the blessing that belongs to the Gentile. You cannot follow them. You are one of the multitudes over this globe who must walk among the nations and be known as Jews, and with words on their lips which mean, 'I wish I had not been born a Jew, I disown any bond with the long travail of my race, I will outdo the Gentile in mocking at our separateness,' they all the while feel breathing on them the breath of contempt because they are Jews, and they will breathe it back poisonously. Can a fresh-made garment of citizenship weave itself straightway into the flesh and change the slow deposit of eighteen centuries? What is the citizenship of him who walks among a people he has no hardy kindred and fellowship with, and has lost the sense of brotherhood with his own race? It is a charter of selfish ambition and rivalry in low greed. He is an alien of spirit, whatever he may be in form; he sucks the blood of mankind, he is not a man, sharing in no loves, sharing in no subjection of the soul, he mocks it all. Is it not truth I speak, Pash?"

"Not exactly, Mordecai," said Pash, "if you mean that I think the worse of myself for being a Jew. What I thank our fathers for is that there are fewer blockheads among us than among other races. But perhaps you are right in thinking the Christians don't like me so well for it."

"Catholics and Protestants have not liked each other much better," said the genial Gideon. "We must wait patiently for prejudices to die out. Many of our people are on a footing with the best, and there's been a good filtering of our blood into high families. I am for making our expectations rational."

"And so am I!" said Mordecai, quickly, leaning forward with the eagerness of one who pleads in some decisive crisis, his long, thin hands clasped together on his lap. "I, too, claim to be a rational Jew. But what is it to be rational—what is it to feel the light of the divine reason growing stronger within and without? It is to see more and more of the hidden bonds that bind and consecrate change as a dependent

growth—yea, consecrate it with kinship: the past becomes my parent and the future stretches toward me the appealing arms of children. Is it rational to drain away the sap of special kindred that makes the families of men rich in interchanged wealth, and various as the forests are various with the glory of the cedar and the palm? When it is rational to say, 'I know not my father or my mother, let my children be aliens to me, that no prayer of mine may touch them,' then it will be rational for the Jew to say, 'I will seek to know no difference between me and the Gentile, I will not cherish the prophetic consciousness of our nationality—let the Hebrew cease to be, and let all his memorials be antiquarian trifles, dead as the wall-paintings of a conjectured race. Yet let his child learn by rote the speech of the Greek, where he abjures his fellow-citizens by the bravery of those who fought foremost at Marathon—let him learn to say that was noble in the Greek, that is the spirit of an immortal nation! But the Jew has no memories that bind him to action; let him laugh that his nation is degraded from a nation; let him hold the monuments of his law which carried within its frame the breath of social justice, of charity, and of household sanctities—let him hold the energy of the prophets, the patient care of the Masters, the fortitude of martyred generations, as mere stuff for a professorship. The business of the Jew in all things is to be even as the rich Gentile."

[.....]

"Well, whatever the Jews contributed at one time, they are a stand-still people," said Lily. "They are the type of obstinate adherence to the superannuated. They may show good abilities when they take up liberal ideas, but as a race they have no development in them."

"That is false!" said Mordecai, leaning forward again with his former eagerness. "Let their history be known and examined; let the seed be sifted, let its beginning be traced to the weed of the wilderness—the more glorious will be the energy that transformed it. Where else is there a nation of whom it may be as truly said that their religion and law and moral life mingled as the stream of blood in the heart and made one growth—where else a people who kept and enlarged their

spiritual store at the very time when they are hated with a hatred as fierce as the forest fires that chase the wild beast from his covert? There is a fable of the Roman, that swimming to save his life he held the roll of his writings between his teeth and saved them from the waters. But how much more than that is true of our race? They struggled to keep their place among the nations like heroes—yea, when the hand was hacked off, they clung with their teeth; but when the plow and the harrow had passed over the last visible signs of their national covenant, and the fruitfulness of their land was stifled with the blood of the sowers and planters, they said, 'The spirit is alive, let us make it a lasting habitation—lasting because movable—so that it may be carried from generation to generation, and our sons unborn may be rich in the things that have been, and possess a hope built on an unchangeable foundation.' They said it and they wrought it, though often breathing with scant life, as in a coffin, or as lying wounded amid a heap of slain. Hooted and scared like the unknown dog, the Hebrew made himself envied for his wealth and wisdom, and was bled of them to fill the bath of Gentile luxury; he absorbed knowledge, he diffused it; his dispersed race was a new Phoenicia working the mines of Greece and carrying their products to the world. The native spirit of our tradition was not to stand still, but to use records as a seed and draw out the compressed virtues of law and prophecy; and while the Gentile, who had said, 'What is yours is ours, and no longer yours,' was reading the letter of our law as a dark inscription, or was turning its parchments into shoe-soles for an army rabid with lust and cruelty, our Masters were still enlarging and illuminating with fresh-fed interpretation. But the dispersion was wide, the yoke of oppression was a spiked torture as well as a load; the exile was forced afar among brutish people, where the consciousness of his race was no clearer to him than the light of the sun to our fathers in the Roman persecution, who had their hiding-place in a cave, and knew not that it was day save by the dimmer burning of their candles. What wonder that multitudes of our people are ignorant, narrow, superstitious? What wonder?"

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Here Mordecai, whose seat was next the fireplace, rose and leaned his arm on the little shelf; his excitement had risen, though his voice, which had begun with unusual strength, was getting hoarser.

"What wonder? The night is unto them, that they have no vision; in their darkness they are unable to divine; the sun is gone down over the prophets, and the day is dark above them; their observances are as nameless relics. But which among the chief of the Gentile nations has not an ignorant multitude? They scorn our people's ignorant observance; but the most accursed ignorance is that which has no observance—sunk to the cunning greed of the fox, to which all law is no more than a trap or the cry of the worrying hound. There is a degradation deep down below the memory that has withered into superstition. In the multitudes of the ignorant on three continents who observe our rites and make the confession of the divine Unity, the soul of Judaism is not dead. Revive the organic centre: let the **unity of Israel** which has made the growth and form of its religion be an outward reality. Looking toward a land and a polity, our dispersed people in all the ends of the earth may share the dignity of a national life which has a voice among the peoples of the East and the West—which will plant the wisdom and skill of our race so that it may be, as of old, a medium of transmission and understanding. Let that come to pass, and the living warmth will spread to the weak extremities of Israel, and superstition will vanish, not in the lawlessness of the renegade, but in the illumination of great facts which widen feeling, and make all knowledge alive as the young offspring of beloved memories."

[.....]

"You have your own way of looking at things, Mordecai, and as you say, your own way seems to you rational. I know you don't hold with the restoration of Judea by miracle, and so on; but you are as well aware as I am that the subject has been mixed with a heap of nonsense both by Jews and Christians. And as to the connection of our race with Palestine, it has been perverted by superstition till it's as demoralizing as the old poor-law. The raff and scum go there to be maintained like

able-bodied paupers, and to be taken special care of by the angel Gabriel when they die. It's no use fighting against facts. We must look where they point; that's what I call rationality. The most learned and liberal men among us who are attached to our religion are for clearing our liturgy of all such notions as a literal fulfilment of the prophecies about restoration, and so on. Prune it of a few useless rites and literal interpretations of that sort, and our religion is the simplest of all religions, and makes no barrier, but a union, between us and the rest of the world."

"As plain as a pike-staff," said Pash, with an ironical laugh. "You pluck it up by the roots, strip off the leaves and bark, shave off the knots, and smooth it at top and bottom; put it where you will, it will do no harm, it will never sprout. You may make a handle of it, or you may throw it on the bonfire of scoured rubbish. I don't see why our rubbish is to be held sacred any more than the rubbish of Brahmanism or Buddhism."

"No," said Mordecai, "no, Pash, because you have lost the heart of the Jew. Community was felt before it was called good. I praise no superstition, I praise the living fountains of enlarging belief. What is growth, completion, development? You began with that question, I apply it to the history of our people. I say that the effect of our separateness will not be completed and have its highest transformation unless our race takes on again the character of a nationality. That is the fulfilment of the religious trust that moulded them into a people, whose life has made half the inspiration of the world. What is it to me that the ten tribes are lost untraceably, or that multitudes of the children of Judah have mixed themselves with the Gentile populations as a river with rivers? Behold our people still! Their skirts spread afar; they are torn and soiled and trodden on; but there is a jeweled breastplate. Let the wealthy men, the monarchs of commerce, the learned in all knowledge, the skilful in all arts, the speakers, the political counselors, who carry in their veins the Hebrew blood which has maintained its vigour in all climates, and the pliancy of the Hebrew genius for which difficulty means new device—let them say, 'we will lift up a standard, we will unite in a labour hard but glorious like that of Moses and Ezra, a

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labour which shall be a worthy fruit of the long anguish whereby our fathers maintained their separateness, refusing the ease of falsehood.' They have wealth enough to redeem the soil from debauched and paupered conquerors; they have the skill of the statesman to devise, the tongue of the orator to persuade. And is there no prophet or poet among us to make the ears of Christian Europe tingle with shame at the hideous obloquy of Christian strife which the Turk gazes at as at the fighting of beasts to which he has lent an arena? There is store of wisdom among us to found a new Jewish polity, grand, simple, just, like the old—a republic where there is equality of protection, an equality which shone like a star on the forehead of our ancient community, and gave it more than the brightness of Western freedom amid the despotisms of the East. Then our race shall have an organic centre, a heart and brain to watch and guide and execute; the outraged Jew shall have a defense in the court of nations, as the outraged Englishman of America. And the world will gain as Israel gains. For there will be a community **in the van of the East** which carries the culture and the sympathies of every great nation in its bosom: there will be a land set for a halting-place of enmities, a neutral ground for the East as Belgium is for the West. Difficulties? I know there are difficulties. But let the spirit of sublime achievement move in the great among our people, and the work will begin."

[.....]

"Amen," said Mordecai, to whom Deronda's words were a cordial. "What is needed is the leaven—what is needed is the seed of fire. The heritage of Israel is beating in the pulses of millions; it lives in their veins as a power without understanding, like the morning exultation of herds; it is the inborn half of memory, moving as in a dream among writings on the walls, which it sees dimly but cannot divide into speech. Let the torch of visible community be lit! Let the reason of Israel disclose itself in a great outward deed, and let there be another great migration, another choosing of Israel to be a nationality whose members may still stretch to the ends of the earth, even as the sons of England and Germany, whom enterprise carries afar, but who still have a national hearth and a tribunal of national opinion.

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Will any say 'It cannot be'? Baruch Spinoza had not a faithful Jewish heart, though he had sucked the life of his intellect at the breasts of Jewish tradition. He laid bare his father's nakedness and said, 'They who scorn him have the higher wisdom.' Yet Baruch Spinoza confessed, he saw not why Israel should not again be a chosen nation. Who says that the history and literature of our race are dead? Are they not as living as the history and literature of Greece and Rome, which have inspired revolutions, enkindled the thought of Europe, and made the unrighteous powers tremble? These were an inheritance dug from the tomb. Ours is an inheritance that has never ceased to quiver in millions of human frames."

[......]

"I justify the choice as all other choice is justified," said Mordecai. "I cherish nothing for the Jewish nation, I seek nothing for them, but the good which promises good to all the nations. The spirit of our religious life, which is one with our national life, is not hatred of aught but wrong. The Master has said, an offence against man is worse than an offence against God. But what wonder if there is hatred in the breasts of Jews, who are children of the ignorant and oppressed—what wonder, since there is hatred in the breasts of Christians? Our national life was a growing light. Let the central fire be kindled again, and the light will reach afar. The degraded and scorned of our race will learn to think of their sacred land, not as a place for saintly beggary to await death in loathsome idleness, but as a republic where the Jewish spirit manifests itself in a new order founded on the old, purified and enriched by the experience our greatest sons have gathered from the life of the ages. How long is it?—only two centuries since a vessel carried over the ocean the beginning of the great North American nation. The people grew like meeting waters—they were various in habit and sect—there came a time, a century ago, when they needed a polity, and there were heroes of peace among them. What had they to form a polity with but memories of Europe, corrected by the vision of a better? Let our wise and wealthy show themselves heroes. They have the memories of the East and West, and they have the full vision of a better. A new Persia with a purified religion magnified

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itself in art and wisdom. So will a new Judaea, poised between East and West—a covenant of reconciliation. Will any say, the prophetic vision of your race has been hopelessly mixed with folly and bigotry: the angel of progress has no message for Judaism—it is a half-buried city for the paid workers to lay open—the waters are rushing by it as a forsaken field? I say that the strongest principle of growth lies in human choice. The sons of Judah have to choose that God may again choose them. The Messianic time is the time when Israel shall will the planting of the national ensign. The Nile overflowed and rushed onward: the Egyptian could not choose the overflow, but he chose to work and make channels for the fructifying waters, and Egypt became the land of corn. Shall man, whose soul is set in the royalty of discernment and resolve, deny his rank and say, I am an onlooker, ask no choice or purpose of me? That is the blasphemy of this time. The divine principle of our race is action, choice, resolved memory. Let us contradict the blasphemy, and help to will our own better future and the better future of the world—not renounce our higher gift and say, 'Let us be as if we were not among the populations;' but choose our full heritage, claim the brotherhood of our nation, and carry into it a new brotherhood with the nations of the Gentiles. The vision is there; it will be fulfilled."

1844. John **RUSKIN**. (1819-1900) (extract) ***The Stones of Venice***. written 1851-1853.	
Preface. **Chapter 1.**	

Preface.

This volume is the first of a series designed by the Author with the purpose of placing in the hands of the public, in more serviceable form, those portions of his earlier works which he thinks deserving of a permanent place in the system of his general teaching. They were at first intended to be accompanied by photographic reductions of the principal plates in the larger volumes; but this design has been modified by the Author's increasing desire to gather his past and present writings into a consistent body, illustrated by one series of plates, purchasable in separate parts, and numbered consecutively. Of other prefatory matter, once intended,—apologetic mostly,—the reader shall be spared the cumber: and a clear prospectus issued by the publisher of the new series of plates, as soon as they are in a state of forwardness.

The second volume of this edition will contain the most useful matter out of the third volume of the old one, closed by its topical index, abridged and corrected.

Brantwood,

Brantwood, 3rd May, 1879.

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Chapter I – The Quarry.

The exaltation, the sin, and the punishment of Tyre have been recorded for us, in perhaps the most touching words ever uttered by the Prophets of Israel against the cities of the stranger. But we read them as a lovely song; and close our ears to the sternness of their warning: for the very depth of the Fall of Tyre has blinded us to its reality, and we forget, as we watch the bleaching of the rocks between the sunshine and the sea, that they were once "as in Eden, the garden of God."

Her successor, like her in perfection of beauty, though less in endurance of dominion, is still left for our beholding in the final period of her decline: a ghost upon the sands of the sea, so weak—so quiet,—so bereft of all but her loveliness, that we might well doubt, as we watched her faint reflection in the mirage of the lagoon, which was the City, and which the Shadow.

I would endeavour to trace the lines of this image before it be for ever lost, and to record, as far as I may, the warning which seems to me to be uttered by every one of the fast-gaining waves, that beat, like passing bells, against the STONES OF VENICE.

The state of Venice existed Thirteen Hundred and Seventy-six years, from the first establishment of a consular government on the island of the Rialto, to the moment when the General-in-chief of the French army of Italy pronounced the Venetian republic a thing of the past. Of this period, Two Hundred and Seventy-six years were passed in a nominal subjection to the cities of old Venetia, especially to Padua, and in an agitated form of democracy, of which the executive appears to have been entrusted to tribunes, chosen, one by the inhabitants of each of the principal islands. For six hundred years, during which the power of Venice was continually on the increase, her government was an elective monarchy, her King or

doge possessing, in early times at least, as much independent authority as any other European sovereign, but an authority gradually subjected to limitation, and shortened almost daily of its prerogatives, while it increased in a spectral and incapable magnificence. The final government of the nobles, under the image of a king, lasted for five hundred years, during which Venice reaped the fruits of her former energies, consumed them,—and expired.

Then the first period, of nine hundred years, presents us with the most interesting spectacle of a people struggling out of anarchy into order and power; and then governed, for the most part, by the worthiest and noblest man whom they could find among them, called their Doge or Leader, with an aristocracy gradually and resolutely forming itself around him, out of which, and at last by which, he was chosen; an aristocracy owing its origin to the accidental numbers, influence, and wealth of some among the families of the fugitives from the older Venetia, and gradually organizing itself, by its unity and heroism, into a separate body.

This first period includes the rise of Venice, her noblest achievements, and the circumstances which determined her character and position among European powers; and within its range, as might have been anticipated, we find the names of all her hero princes,—of Pietro Urseolo, Ordalafo Falier, Domenico Michieli, Sebastiano Ziani, and Enrico Dandolo.

I date the commencement of the Fall of Venice from the death of Carlo Zeno, 8th May, 1418; the *visible* commencement from that of another of her noblest and wisest children, the Doge Tomaso Mocenigo, who expired five years later. The reign of Foscari followed, gloomy with pestilence and war; a war in which large acquisitions of territory were made by subtle or fortunate policy in Lombardy, and disgrace, significant as irreparable, sustained in the battles on the Po at Cremona, and in the marshes of Caravaggio. In 1454, Venice, the first of the states of Christendom, humiliated herself to the Turk in the same year was established the

Inquisition of State, and from this period her government takes the perfidious and mysterious form under which it is usually conceived. In 1477, the great Turkish invasion spread terror to the shores of the lagoons; and in 1508 the league of Cambrai marks the period usually assigned as the commencement of the decline of the Venetian power; the commercial prosperity of Venice in the close of the fifteenth century blinding her historians to the previous evidence of the diminution of her internal strength.

I say domestic and individual; for—and this is the second point which I wish the reader to keep in mind—the most curious phenomenon in all Venetian history is the vitality of religion in private life, and its deadness in public policy. Amidst the enthusiasm, chivalry, or fanaticism of the other states of Europe, Venice stands, from first to last, like a masked statue; her coldness impenetrable, her exertion only aroused by the touch of a secret spring. That spring was her commercial interest,—this the one motive of all her important political acts, or enduring national animosities. She could forgive insults to her honour, but never rivalship in her commerce; she calculated the glory of her conquests by their value, and estimated their justice by their facility. The fame of success remains; when the motives of attempt are forgotten; and the casual reader of her history may perhaps be surprised to be reminded, that the expedition which was commanded by the noblest of her princes, and whose results added most to her military glory, was one in which while all Europe around her was wasted by the fire of its devotion, she first calculated the highest price she could exact from its piety for the armament she furnished, and then, for the advancement of her own private interests, at once broke her faith and betrayed her religion.

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(extract) ***Culture and Anarchy***: *An Essay in Political And Social Criticism*. written 1869.

Preface.
Introduction.
Chapter One.

Preface.

My foremost design in writing this Preface is to address a word of exhortation to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. In the essay which follows, the reader will often find Bishop Wilson quoted. To me and to the members of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge his name and writings are still, no doubt, familiar; but the world is fast going away from old-fashioned people of his sort, and I learnt with consternation lately from a brilliant and distinguished votary of the natural sciences, that he had never so much as heard of Bishop Wilson, and that he imagined me to have invented him. At a moment when the Courts of Law have just taken off the embargo from the recreative religion furnished on Sundays by my gifted acquaintance and others, and when St Martin's Hall and the Alhambra will soon be beginning again to resound with their pulpit-eloquence, it distresses one to think that the new lights should not only have, in general, a very low opinion of the preachers of the old religion, but that they should have it without knowing the best that these preachers can do. And that they are in this case is owing in part, certainly, to the negligence of the Christian Knowledge Society. In old times they used to print and spread abroad Bishop Wilson's *Maxims of Piety and Christianity*; the

copy of this work which I use is one of their publications, bearing their imprint, and bound in the well-known brown calf which they made familiar to our childhood; but the date of my copy is 1812. I know of no copy besides, and I believe the work is no longer one of those printed and circulated by the Society. Hence the error, flattering, I own, to me personally, yet in itself to be regretted, of the distinguished physicist already mentioned.

But Bishop Wilson's *Maxims* deserve to be circulated as a religious book, not only by comparison with the cartloads of rubbish circulated at present under this designation, but for their own sake, and even by comparison with the other works of the same author. Over the far better known *Sacra Privata* they have this advantage, that they were prepared by him for his own private use, while the *Sacra Privata* were prepared by him for the use of the public. The *Maxims* were never meant to be printed, and have on that account, like a work of, doubtless, far deeper emotion and power, the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, something peculiarly sincere and first-hand about them. Some of the best things from the *Maxims* have passed into the *Sacra Privata*; still, in the *Maxims*, we have them as they first arose; and whereas, too, in the *Sacra Privata* the writer speaks very often as one of the clergy, and as addressing the clergy, in the *Maxims* he almost always speaks solely as a man. I am not saying a word against the *Sacra Privata*, for which I have the highest respect; only the *Maxims* seem to me a better and a more edifying book still. They should be read, as Joubert says Nicole should be read, with a direct aim at practice. The reader will leave on one side things which, from the change of time and from the changed point of view which the change of time inevitably brings with it, no longer suit him; enough will remain to serve as a sample of the very best, perhaps, which our nation and race can do in the way of religious writing. Monsieur Michelet makes it a reproach to us that, in all the doubt as to the real author of the *Imitation*, no one has ever dreamed of ascribing that work to an Englishman. It is true, the *Imitation* could not well have been written by an Englishman; the religious delicacy and the profound asceticism of that admirable book are hardly in our nature. This would be

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more of a reproach to us if in poetry, which requires, no less than religion, a true delicacy of spiritual perception, our race had not done such great things; and if the *Imitation*, exquisite as it is, did not, as I have elsewhere remarked, belong to a class of works in which the perfect balance of human nature is lost, and which have therefore, as spiritual productions, in their contents something excessive and morbid, in their form something not thoroughly sound. On a lower range than the *Imitation*, and awakening in our nature chords less poetical and delicate, the *Maxims* of Bishop Wilson are, as a religious work, far more solid. To the most sincere ardour and unction, Bishop Wilson unites, in these *Maxims*, that downright honesty and plain good sense which our English race has so powerfully applied to the divine impossibilities of religion; by which it has brought religion so much into practical life, and has done its allotted part in promoting upon earth the kingdom of God. But with ardour and unction religion, as we all know, may still be fanatical; with honesty and good sense, it may still be prosaic; and the fruit of honesty and good sense united with ardour and unction is often only a prosaic religion held fanatically. Bishop Wilson's excellence lies in a balance of the four qualities, and in a fulness and perfection of them, which makes this untoward result impossible; his unction is so perfect, and in such happy alliance with his good sense, that it becomes tenderness and fervent charity; his good sense is so perfect and in such happy alliance with his unction, that it becomes moderation and insight. While, therefore, the type of religion exhibited in his *Maxims* is English, it is yet a type of a far higher kind than is in general reached by Bishop Wilson's countrymen; and yet, being English, it is possible and attainable for them. And so I conclude as I began, by saying that a work of this sort is one which the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge should not suffer to remain out of print or out of currency.

To pass now to the matters canvassed in the following essay. The whole scope of the essay is to recommend culture as the great help out of our present difficulties; culture being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the

world, and, through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits, which we now follow staunchly but mechanically, vainly imagining that there is a virtue in following them staunchly which makes up for the mischief of following them mechanically. This, and this alone, is the scope of the following essay. I say again here, what I have said in the pages which follow, that from the faults and weaknesses of bookmen a notion of something bookish, pedantic, and futile has got itself more or less connected with the word culture, and that it is a pity we cannot use a word more perfectly free from all shadow of reproach. And yet, futile as are many bookmen, and helpless as books and reading often prove for bringing nearer to perfection those who use them, one must, I think, be struck more and more, the longer one lives, to find how much, in our present society, a man's life of each day depends for its solidity and value on whether he reads during that day, and, far more still, on what he reads during it. More and more he who examines himself will find the difference it makes to him, at the end of any given day, whether or no he has pursued his avocations throughout it without reading at all; and whether or no, having read something, he has read the newspapers only. This, however, is a matter for each man's private conscience and experience. If a man without books or reading, or reading nothing but his letters and the newspapers, gets nevertheless a fresh and free play of the best thoughts upon his stock notions and habits, he has got culture. He has got that for which we prize and recommend culture; he has got that which at the present moment we seek culture that it may give us. This inward operation is the very life and essence of culture, as we conceive it.

Nevertheless, it is not easy so to frame one's discourse concerning the operation of culture, as to avoid giving frequent occasion to a misunderstanding whereby the essential inwardness of the operation is lost sight of. We are supposed, when we criticise by the help of culture some imperfect doing or other, to have in our eye some well-known rival plan of doing, which we want to serve and recommend. Thus, for instance, because I have freely pointed out the dangers and

inconveniences to which our literature is exposed in the absence of any centre of taste and authority like the French Academy, it is constantly said that I want to introduce here in England an institution like the French Academy. I have indeed expressly declared that I wanted no such thing; but let us notice how it is just our worship of machinery, and of external doing, which leads to this charge being brought; and how the inwardness of culture makes us seize, for watching and cure, the faults to which our want of an Academy inclines us, and yet prevents us from trusting to an arm of flesh, as the Puritans say,—from blindly flying to this outward machinery of an Academy, in order to help ourselves. For the very same culture and free inward play of thought which shows us how the Corinthian style, or the whimsies about the One Primeval Language, are generated and strengthened in the absence of an Academy, shows us, too, how little any Academy, such as we should be likely to get, would cure them. Every one who knows the characteristics of our national life, and the tendencies so fully discussed in the following pages, knows exactly what an English Academy would be like. One can see the happy family in one's mind's eye as distinctly as if it was already constituted. Lord Stanhope, the Bishop of Oxford, Mr Gladstone, the Dean of Westminster, Mr Froude, Mr Henry Reeve,— everything which is influential, accomplished, and distinguished; and then, some fine morning, a dissatisfaction of the public mind with this brilliant and select coterie, a flight of Corinthian leading articles, and an irruption of Mr G. A. Sala. Clearly, this is not what will do us good. The very same faults,—the want of sensitiveness of intellectual conscience, the disbelief in right reason, the dislike of authority,—which have hindered our having an Academy and have worked injuriously in our literature, would also hinder us from making our Academy, if we established it, one which would really correct them. And culture, which shows us truly the faults, shows us this also just as truly.

It is by a like sort of misunderstanding, again, that Mr Oscar Browning, one of the assistant-masters at Eton, takes up in the *Quarterly Review* the cudgels for Eton, as if I had attacked Eton, because I have said, in a book about foreign schools, that a

man may well prefer to teach his three or four hours a day without keeping a boarding-house; and that there are great dangers in cramming little boys of eight or ten and making them compete for an object of great value to their parents; and, again, that the manufacture and supply of school-books, in England, much needs regulation by some competent authority. Mr Oscar Browning gives us to understand that at Eton he and others, with perfect satisfaction to themselves and the public, combine the functions of teaching and of keeping a boarding-house; that he knows excellent men (and, indeed, well he may, for a brother of his own, I am told, is one of the best of them,) engaged in preparing little boys for competitive examinations, and that the result, as tested at Eton, gives perfect satisfaction. And as to school-books he adds, finally, that Dr. William Smith, the learned and distinguished editor of the *Quarterly Review*, is, as we all know, the compiler of school-books meritorious and many. This is what Mr Oscar Browning gives us to understand in the *Quarterly Review*, and it is impossible not to read with pleasure what he says. For what can give a finer example of that frankness and manly self- confidence which our great public schools, and none of them so much as Eton, are supposed to inspire, of that buoyant ease in holding up one's head, speaking out what is in one's mind, and flinging off all sheepishness and awkwardness, than to see an Eton assistant-master offering in fact himself as evidence that to combine boarding-house- keeping with teaching is a good thing, and his brother as evidence that to train and race little boys for competitive examinations is a good thing? Nay, and one sees that this frank-hearted Eton self-confidence is contagious; for has not Mr Oscar Browning managed to fire Dr. William Smith (himself, no doubt, the modestest man alive, and never trained at Eton) with the same spirit, and made him insert in his own *Review* a puff, so to speak, of his own school-books, declaring that they are (as they are) meritorious and many? Nevertheless, Mr Oscar Browning is wrong in thinking that I wished to run down Eton; and his repetition on behalf of Eton, with this idea in his head, of the strains of his heroic ancestor, Malvina's Oscar, as they are recorded by the family poet, Ossian, is unnecessary. "The wild boar rushes over their tombs, but he does not

disturb their repose. They still love the sport of their youth, and mount the wind with joy." All I meant to say was, that there were unpleasantnesses in uniting the keeping a boarding-house with teaching, and dangers in cramming and racing little boys for competitive examinations, and charlatanism and extravagance in the manufacture and supply of our school-books. But when Mr Oscar Browning tells us that all these have been happily got rid of in his case, and his brother's case, and Dr. William Smith's case, then I say that this is just what I wish, and I hope other people will follow their good example. All I seek is that such blemishes should not through any negligence, self-love, or want of due self-examination, be suffered to continue.

Natural, as we have said, the sort of misunderstanding just noticed is; yet our usefulness depends upon our being able to clear it away, and to convince those who mechanically serve some stock notion or operation, and thereby go astray, that it is not culture's work or aim to give the victory to some rival fetish, but simply to turn a free and fresh stream of thought upon the whole matter in question. In a thing of more immediate interest, just now, than either of the two we have mentioned, the like misunderstanding prevails; and until it is dissipated, culture can do no good work in the matter. When we criticise the present operation of disestablishing the Irish Church, not by the power of reason and justice, but by the power of the antipathy of the Protestant Nonconformists, English and Scotch, to establishments, we are charged with being dreamers of dreams, which the national will has rudely shattered, for endowing the religious sects all round; or we are called enemies of the Nonconformists, blind partisans of the Anglican Establishment. More than a few words we must give to showing how erroneous are these charges; because if they were true, we should be actually subverting our own design, and playing false to that culture which it is our very purpose to recommend.

Certainly we are no enemies of the Nonconformists; for, on the contrary, what we aim at is their perfection. Culture, which is the study of perfection, leads us, as we in the following pages have shown, to conceive of true human perfection as a *harmonious* perfection, developing all sides of our humanity; and as a *general*

perfection, developing all parts of our society. For if one member suffer, the other members must suffer with it; and the fewer there are that follow the true way of salvation the harder that way is to find. And while the Nonconformists, the successors and representatives of the Puritans, and like them staunchly walking by the best light they have, make a large part of what is strongest and most serious in this nation and therefore attract our respect and interest, yet all that, in what follows, is said about Hebraism and Hellenism, has for its main result to show how our Puritans, ancient and modern, have not enough added to their care for walking staunchly by the best light they have, a care that that light be not darkness; how they have developed one side of their humanity at the expense of all others, and have become incomplete and mutilated men in consequence. Thus falling short of harmonious perfection, they fail to follow the true way of salvation. Therefore that way is made the harder for others to find, general perfection is put further off out of our reach, and the confusion and perplexity in which our society now labours is increased by the Nonconformists rather than diminished by them. So while we praise and esteem the zeal of the Nonconformists in walking staunchly by the best light they have, and desire to take no whit from it, we seek to add to this what we call sweetness and light, and develope their full humanity more perfectly; and to seek this is certainly not to be the enemy of the Nonconformists.

But now, with these ideas in our head, we come across the present operation for disestablishing the Irish Church by the power of the Nonconformists' antipathy to religious establishments and endowments. And we see Liberal statesmen, for whose purpose this antipathy happens to be convenient, flattering it all they can; saying that though they have no intention of laying hands on an Establishment which is efficient and popular, like the Anglican Establishment here in England, yet it is in the abstract a fine and good thing that religion should be left to the voluntary support of its promoters, and should thus gain in energy and independence; and Mr Gladstone has no words strong enough to express his admiration of the refusal of State-aid by the Irish Roman Catholics, who have never yet been seriously asked to

accept it, but who would a good deal embarrass him if they demanded it. And we see philosophical politicians, with a turn for swimming with the stream, like Mr Baxter or Mr Charles Buxton, and philosophical divines with the same turn, like the Dean of Canterbury, seeking to give a sort of grand stamp of generality and solemnity to this antipathy of the Nonconformists, and to dress it out as a law of human progress in the future. Now, nothing can be pleasanter than swimming with the stream; and we might gladly, if we could, try in our unsystematic way to help Mr Baxter, and Mr Charles Buxton, and the Dean of Canterbury, in their labours at once philosophical and popular. But we have got fixed in our minds that a more full and harmonious development of their humanity is what the Nonconformists most want, that narrowness, one-sidedness, and incompleteness is what they most suffer from; in a word, that in what we call *provinciality* they abound, but in what we may call *totality* they fall short.

And they fall short more than the members of Establishments. The great works by which, not only in literature, art, and science generally, but in religion itself, the human spirit has manifested its approaches to totality, and a full, harmonious perfection, and by which it stimulates and helps forward the world's general perfection, come, not from Nonconformists, but from men who either belong to Establishments or have been trained in them. A Nonconformist minister, the Rev. Edward White, who has lately written a temperate and well-reasoned pamphlet against Church Establishments, says that "the unendowed and unestablished communities of England exert full as much moral and ennobling influence upon the conduct of statesmen as that Church which is both established and endowed." That depends upon what one means by moral and ennobling influence. The believer in machinery may think that to get a Government to abolish Church-rates or to legalize marriage with a deceased wife's sister is to exert a moral and ennobling influence upon Government. But a lover of perfection, who looks to inward ripeness for the true springs of conduct, will surely think that as Shakspeare has done more for the inward ripeness of our statesmen than Dr. Watts, and has, therefore, done more to

moralize and ennoble them, so an Establishment which has produced Hooker, Barrow, Butler, has done more to moralize and ennoble English statesmen and their conduct than communities which have produced the Nonconformist divines. The fruitful men of English Puritanism and Nonconformity are men who were trained within the pale of the Establishment,—Milton, Baxter, Wesley. A generation or two outside the Establishment, and Puritanism produces men of national mark no more. With the same doctrine and discipline, men of national mark are produced in Scotland; but in an Establishment. With the same doctrine and discipline, men of national and even European mark are produced in Germany, Switzerland, France; but in Establishments. Only two religious disciplines seem exempted; or comparatively exempted, from the operation of the law which seems to forbid the rearing, outside of national establishments, of men of the highest spiritual significance. These two are the Roman Catholic and the Jewish. And these, both of them, rest on Establishments, which, though not indeed national, are cosmopolitan; and perhaps here, what the individual man does not lose by these conditions of his rearing, the citizen, and the State of which he is a citizen, loses.

What, now, can be the reason of this undeniable provincialism of the English Puritans and Protestant Nonconformists, a provincialism which has two main types,—a bitter type and a smug type,—but which in both its types is vulgarising, and thwarts the full perfection of our humanity? Men of genius and character are born and reared in this medium as in any other. From the faults of the mass such men will always be comparatively free, and they will always excite our interest; yet in this medium they seem to have a special difficulty in breaking through what bounds them, and in developing their totality. Surely the reason is, that the Nonconformist is not in contact with the main current of national life, like the member of an Establishment. In a matter of such deep and vital concern as religion, this separation from the main current of the national life has peculiar importance. In the following essay we have discussed at length the tendency in us to *Hebraise*, as we call it; that is, to sacrifice all other sides of our being to the religious side. This

tendency has its cause in the divine beauty and grandeur of religion, and bears affecting testimony to them; but we have seen that it has dangers for us, we have seen that it leads to a narrow and twisted growth of our religious side itself, and to a failure in perfection. But if we tend to Hebraise even in an Establishment, with the main current of national life flowing round us, and reminding us in all ways of the variety and fulness of human existence,—by a Church which is historical as the State itself is historical, and whose order, ceremonies, and monuments reach, like those of the State, far beyond any fancies and devisings of ours, and by institutions such as the Universities, formed to defend and advance that very culture and many-sided development which it is the danger of Hebraising to make us neglect,—how much more must we tend to Hebraise when we lack these preventives. One may say that to be reared a member of an Establishment is in itself a lesson of religious moderation, and a help towards culture and harmonious perfection. Instead of battling for his own private forms for expressing the inexpressible and defining the undefinable, a man takes those which have commended themselves most to the religious life of his nation; and while he may be sure that within those forms the religious side of his own nature may find its satisfaction, he has leisure and composure to satisfy other sides of his nature as well.

But with the member of a Nonconforming or self-made religious community how different! The sectary's *eigene grosse Erfindungen*, as Goethe calls them,—the precious discoveries of himself and his friends for expressing the inexpressible and defining the undefinable in peculiar forms of their own, cannot but, as he has voluntarily chosen them, and is personally responsible for them, fill his whole mind. He is zealous to do battle for them and affirm them, for in affirming them he affirms himself, and that is what we all like. Other sides of his being are thus neglected, because the religious side, always tending in every serious man to predominance over our other spiritual sides, is in him made quite absorbing and tyrannous by the condition of self-assertion and challenge which he has chosen for himself. And just what is not essential in religion he comes to mistake for essential, and a thousand

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times the more readily because he has chosen it of himself; and religious activity he fancies to consist in battling for it. All this leaves him little leisure or inclination for culture; to which, besides, he has no great institutions not of his own making, like the Universities connected with the national Establishment, to invite him; but only such institutions as, like the order and discipline of his religion, he may have invented for himself, and invented under the sway of the narrow and tyrannous notions of religion fostered in him as we have seen. Thus, while a national Establishment of religion favours totality, *hole-and-corner* forms of religion (to use an expressive popular word) inevitably favour provincialism.

But the Nonconformists, and many of our Liberal friends along with them, have a plausible plan for getting rid of this provincialism, if, as they can hardly quite deny, it exists. "Let us all be in the same boat," they cry; "open the Universities to everybody, and let there be no establishment of religion at all!" Open the Universities by all means; but, as to the second point about establishment, let us sift the proposal a little. It does seem at first a little like that proposal of the fox, who had lost his own tail, to put all the other foxes in the same boat by a general cutting off of tails; and we know that moralists have decided that the right course here was, not to adopt this plausible suggestion, and cut off tails all round, but rather that the other foxes should keep their tails, and that the fox without a tail should get one. And so we might be inclined to urge that, to cure the evil of the Nonconformists' provincialism, the right way can hardly be to provincialize us all round.

However, perhaps we shall not be provincialized. For the Rev. Edward White says that probably, "when all good men alike are placed in a condition of religious equality, and the whole complicated iniquity of Government Church patronage is swept away, more of moral and ennobling influence than ever will be brought to bear upon the action of statesmen." We already have an example of religious equality in our colonies. "In the colonies," says *The Times*, "we see religious communities unfettered by State-control, and the State relieved from one of the most troublesome and irritating of responsibilities." But America is the great example

alleged by those who are against establishments for religion. Our topic at this moment is the influence of religious establishments on culture; and it is remarkable that Mr Bright, who has taken lately to representing himself as, above all, a promoter of reason and of the simple natural truth of things, and his policy as a fostering of the growth of intelligence,—just the aims, as is well known, of culture also,—Mr Bright, in a speech at Birmingham about education, seized on the very point which seems to concern our topic, when he said: "I believe the people of the United States have offered to the world more valuable information during the last forty years than all Europe put together." So America, without religious establishments, seems to get ahead of us all in culture *and* totality; and these are the cure for provincialism.

On the other hand, another friend of reason and the simple natural truth of things, Monsieur Renan, says of America, in a book he has recently published, what seems to conflict violently with what Mr Bright says. Mr Bright affirms that, not only have the United States thus informed Europe, but they have done it without a great apparatus of higher and scientific instruction, and by dint of all classes in America being "sufficiently educated to be able to read, and to comprehend, and to think; and that, I maintain, is the foundation of all subsequent progress." And then comes Monsieur Renan, and says: "The sound instruction of the people is an effect of the high culture of certain classes. The countries which, like the United States, have created a considerable popular instruction without any serious higher instruction, will long have to expiate this fault by their intellectual mediocrity, their vulgarity of manners, their superficial spirit, their lack of general intelligence."* Now, which of these two friends of culture are we to believe? Monsieur Renan seems more to have in his eye what we ourselves mean by culture; because Mr Bright always has in his eye what he calls "a commendable interest" in politics and political agitations. As he said only the other day at Birmingham: "At this moment,—in fact, I may say at every moment in the history of a free country,—there is nothing that is so much worth discussing as politics." And he keeps repeating, with all the powers of his noble oratory, the old story, how to the thoughtfulness and intelligence of the people of

great towns we owe all our improvements in the last thirty years, and how these improvements have hitherto consisted in Parliamentary reform, and free trade, and abolition of Church rates, and so on; and how they are now about to consist in getting rid of minority-members, and in introducing a free breakfast- table, and in abolishing the Irish Church by the power of the Nonconformists' antipathy to establishments, and much more of the same kind. And though our pauperism and ignorance, and all the questions which are called social, seem now to be forcing themselves upon his mind, yet he still goes on with his glorifying of the great towns, and the Liberals, and their operations for the last thirty years. It never seems to occur to him that the present troubled state of our social life has anything to do with the thirty years' blind worship of their nostrums by himself and our Liberal friends, or that it throws any doubts upon the sufficiency of this worship. But he thinks what is still amiss is due to the stupidity of the Tories, and will be cured by the thoughtfulness and intelligence of the great towns, and by the Liberals going on gloriously with their political operations as before; or that it will cure itself. So we see what Mr Bright means by thoughtfulness and intelligence, and in what manner, according to him, we are to grow in them. And, no doubt, in America all classes read their newspaper and take a commendable interest in politics more than here or anywhere else in Europe.

But, in the following essay, we have been led to doubt the sufficiency of all this political operating of ours, pursued mechanically as we pursue it; and we found that general intelligence, as Monsieur Renan calls it, or, in our own words, a reference of all our operating to a firm intelligible law of things, was just what we were without, and that we were without it because we worshipped our machinery so devoutly. Therefore, we conclude that Monsieur Renan, more than Mr Bright, means by reason and intelligence the same thing as we do; and when he says that America, that chosen home of newspapers and politics, is without general intelligence; we think it likely, from the circumstances of the case, that this is so; and that, in culture and totality, America, instead of surpassing us all, falls short.

And,—to keep to our point of the influence of religious establishments upon culture and a high development of our humanity,— we can surely see reasons why, with all her energy and fine gifts, America does not show more of this development, or more promise of this. In the following essay it will be seen how our society distributes itself into Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace, and America is just ourselves, with the Barbarians quite left out, and the Populace nearly. This leaves the Philistines for the great bulk of the nation;—a livelier sort of Philistine than ours, and with the pressure and false ideal of our Barbarians taken away, but left all the more to himself and to have his full swing. And as we have found that the strongest and most vital part of English Philistinism was the Puritan and Hebraising middle-class, and that its Hebraising keeps it from culture and totality, so it is notorious that the people of the United States issues from this class, and reproduces its tendencies,—its narrow conception of man's spiritual range and of his one thing needful. From Maine to Florida, and back again, all America Hebraises. Difficult as it is to speak of a people merely from what one reads, yet that, I think, one may, without much fear of contradiction say. I mean, when, in the United States, any spiritual side in a man is wakened to activity, it is generally the religious side, and the religious side in a narrow way. Social reformers go to Moses or St Paul for their doctrines, and have no notion there is anywhere else to go to; earnest young men at schools and universities, instead of conceiving salvation as a harmonious perfection only to be won by unreservedly cultivating many sides in us, conceive of it in the old Puritan fashion, and fling themselves ardently upon it in the old, false ways of this fashion, which we know so well, and such as Mr Hammond, the American revivalist, has lately, at Mr Spurgeon's Tabernacle, been refreshing our memory with. Now, if America thus Hebraises more than either England or Germany, will any one deny that the absence of religious establishments has much to do with it? We have seen how establishments tend to give us a sense of a historical life of the human spirit, outside and beyond our own fancies and feelings; how they thus tend to suggest new sides and sympathies in us to cultivate; how, further, by saving us from having

to invent and fight for our own forms of religion, they give us leisure and calm to steady our view of religion itself,—the most overpowering of objects, as it is the grandest,—and to enlarge our first crude notions of the one thing needful. But, in a serious people, where every one has to choose and strive for his own order and discipline of religion, the contention about these non-essentials occupies his mind, his first crude notions about the one thing needful do not get purged, and they invade the whole spiritual man in him, and then, making a solitude, they call it heavenly peace.

I remember a Nonconformist manufacturer, in a town of the Midland counties, telling me that when he first came there, some years ago, the place had no Dissenters; but he had opened an Independent chapel in it, and now Church and Dissent were pretty equally divided, with sharp contests between them. I said, that seemed a pity. "A pity?" cried he; "not at all! Only think of all the zeal and activity which the collision calls forth!" "Ah, but, my dear friend," I answered, "only think of all the nonsense which you now hold quite firmly, which you would never have held if you had not been contradicting your adversary in it all these years!" The more serious the people, and the more prominent the religious side in it, the greater is the danger of this side, if set to choose out forms for itself and fight for existence, swelling and spreading till it swallows all other spiritual sides up, intercepts and absorbs all nutriment which should have gone to them, and leaves Hebraism rampant in us and Hellenism stamped out.

Culture, and the harmonious perfection of our whole being, and what we call totality, then become secondary matters; and the institutions, which should develope these, take the same narrow and partial view of humanity and its wants as the free religious communities take. Just as the free churches of Mr Beecher or Brother Noyes, with their provincialism and want of centrality, make mere Hebraisers in religion, and not perfect men, so the university of Mr Ezra Cornell, a really noble monument of his munificence, yet seems to rest on a provincial misconception of

what culture truly is, and to be calculated to produce miners, or engineers, or architects, not sweetness and light.

And, therefore, when the Rev. Edward White asks the same kind of question about America that he has asked about England, and wants to know whether, without religious establishments, as much is not done in America for the higher national life as is done for that life here, we answer in the same way as we did before, that as much is not done. Because to enable and stir up people to read their Bible and the newspapers, and to get a practical knowledge of their business, does not serve to the higher spiritual life of a nation so much as culture, truly conceived, serves; and a true conception of culture is, as Monsieur Renan's words show, just what America fails in.

To the many who think that culture, and sweetness, and light, are all moonshine, this will not appear to matter much; but with us, who value them, and who think that we have traced much of our present discomfort to the want of them, it weighs a great deal. So not only do we say that the Nonconformists have got provincialism and lost totality by the want of a religious establishment, but we say that the very example which they bring forward to help their case makes against them; and that when they triumphantly show us America without religious establishments, they only show us a whole nation touched, amidst all its greatness and promise, with that provincialism which it is our aim to extirpate in the English Nonconformists.

But now to evince the disinterestedness which culture, as I have said, teaches us. We have seen the narrowness generated in Puritanism by its hole-and-corner organisation, and we propose to cure it by bringing Puritanism more into contact with the main current of national life. Here we are fully at one with the Dean of Westminster; and, indeed, he and we were trained in the same school to mark the narrowness of Puritanism, and to wish to cure it. But he and others would give to the present Anglican Establishment a character the most latitudinarian, as it is called, possible; availing themselves for this purpose of the diversity of tendencies and

doctrines which does undoubtedly exist already in the Anglican formularies; and they would say to the Puritans: "Come all of you into this liberally conceived Anglican Establishment." But to say this is hardly, perhaps, to take sufficient account of the course of history, or of the strength of men's feelings in what concerns religion, or of the gravity which may have come to attach itself to points of religious order and discipline merely. When the Rev. Edward White talks of "sweeping away the whole complicated iniquity of Government Church patronage," he uses language which has been forced upon him by his position, but which is, as we have seen, devoid of any real solidity. But when he talks of the religious communities "which have for three hundred years contended for the power of the congregation in the management of their own affairs," then he talks history; and his language has behind it, in my opinion, facts which make the latitudinarianism of our Broad Churchmen quite illusory. Certainly, culture will never make us think it an essential of religion whether we have in our Church discipline "a popular authority of elders," as Hooker calls it, or whether we have Episcopal jurisdiction. Certainly, Hooker himself did not think it an essential; for in the dedication of his *Ecclesiastical Polity*, speaking of these questions of Church discipline which gave occasion to his great work, he says they are "in truth, for the greatest part, such silly things, that very easiness doth make them hard to be disputed of in serious manner." Hooker's great work against the impugners of the order and discipline of the Church of England was written (and this is too indistinctly seized by many who read it), not because Episcopalianism is essential, but because its impugners maintained that Presbyterianism is essential, and that Episcopalianism is sinful. Neither the one nor the other is either essential or sinful, and much may be said on behalf of both. But what is important to be remarked is that *both were in the Church of England at the Reformation*, and that Presbyterianism was only extruded gradually. We have mentioned Hooker, and nothing better illustrates what has just been asserted than the following incident in Hooker's own career, which every one has read, for it is

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related in Isaac Walton's *Life of Hooker*, but of which, probably, the significance has been fully grasped by not one-half of those who have read it.

Hooker was through the influence of Archbishop Whitgift appointed, in 1585, Master of the Temple; but a great effort had just been made to obtain the place for a Mr Walter Travers, well known in that day, though now it is Hooker's name which alone preserves his. This Travers was then afternoon-lecturer at the Temple. The Master whose death made the vacancy, Alvey, recommended on his deathbed Travers for his successor, the society was favourable to him, and he had the support of the Lord Treasurer Burghley. After Hooker's appointment to the Mastership, Travers remained afternoon-lecturer, and combated in the afternoons the doctrine which Hooker preached in the mornings. Now, this Travers, originally a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, afterwards afternoon-lecturer at the Temple, recommended for the Mastership by the foregoing Master, whose opinions, it is said, agreed with his, favoured by the society of the Temple, and supported by the Prime Minister,—this Travers was not an Episcopally ordained clergyman at all; he was a Presbyterian, a partisan of the Geneva church-discipline, as it was then called, and "had taken orders," says Walton, "by the Presbyters in Antwerp." In another place Walton speaks of his orders yet more fully:—"He had disowned," he says, "the English Established Church and Episcopacy, and went to Geneva, and afterwards to Antwerp, to be ordained minister, as he was by Villers and Cartwright and others the heads of a congregation there; and so came back again more confirmed for the discipline." Villers and Cartwright are in like manner examples of Presbyterianism within the Church of England, which was common enough at that time; but perhaps nothing can better give us a lively sense of its presence there than this history of Travers, which is as if Mr Binney were now afternoon-reader at Lincoln's Inn or the Temple, were to be a candidate, favoured by the benchers and by the Prime Minister, for the Mastership, and were only kept out of the post by the accident of the Archbishop of Canterbury's influence with the Queen carrying a rival candidate.

Presbyterianism, with its popular principle of the power of the congregation in the management of their own affairs, was extruded from the Church of England, and men like Travers can no longer appear in her pulpits. Perhaps if a government like that of Elizabeth, with secular statesmen like the Cecils, and ecclesiastical statesmen like Whitgift, could have been prolonged, Presbyterianism might, by a wise mixture of concession and firmness, have been absorbed in the Establishment. Lord Bolingbroke, on a matter of this kind a very clear-judging and impartial witness, says, in a work far too little read, his *Remarks on English History*:—"The measures pursued and the temper observed in Queen Elizabeth's time tended to diminish the religious opposition by a slow, a gentle, and for that very reason an effectual progression. There was even room to hope that when the first fire of the Dissenters' zeal was passed, reasonable terms of union with the Established Church might be accepted by such of them as were not intoxicated with fanaticism. These were friends to order, though they disputed about it. If these friends of Calvin's discipline had been once incorporated with the Established Church, the remaining sectaries would have been of little moment, either for numbers or reputation; and the very means which were proper to gain these friends, were likewise the most effectual to hinder the increase of them, and of the other sectaries in the meantime." The temper and ill judgment of the Stuarts made shipwreck of all policy of this kind. Yet speaking even of the time of the Stuarts, but their early time, Clarendon says that if Bishop Andrewes had succeeded Bancroft at Canterbury, the disaffection of separatists might have been stayed and healed. This, however, was not to be; and Presbyterianism, after exercising for some years the law of the strongest, itself in Charles the Second's reign suffered under this law, and was finally cast out from the Church of England.

Now the points of church discipline at issue between Presbyterianism and Episcopalianism are, as has been said, not essential. They might probably once have been settled in a sense altogether favourable to Episcopalianism. Hooker may have been right in thinking that there were in his time circumstances which made it

essential that they should be settled in this sense, though the points in themselves were not essential. But by the very fact of the settlement not having then been effected, of the breach having gone on and widened, of the Nonconformists not having been amicably incorporated with the Establishment but violently cast out from it, the circumstances are now altogether altered. Isaac Walton, a fervent Churchman, complains that "the principles of the Nonconformists grew at last to such a height and were vented so daringly, that, beside the loss of life and limbs, the Church and State were both forced to use such other severities as will not admit of an excuse, if it had not been to prevent confusion and the perilous consequences of it." But those very severities have of themselves made union on an Episcopalian footing impossible. Besides, Presbyterianism, the popular authority of elders, the power of the congregation in the management of their own affairs, has that warrant given to it by Scripture and by the proceedings of the early Christian Churches, it is so consonant with the spirit of Protestantism which made the Reformation and which has such strength in this country, it is so predominant in the practice of other reformed churches, it was so strong in the original reformed Church of England, that one cannot help doubting whether any settlement which suppressed it could have been really permanent, and whether it would not have kept appearing again and again, and causing dissension.

Well, then, if culture is the disinterested endeavour after man's perfection, will it not make us wish to cure the provincialism of the Nonconformists, not by making Churchmen provincial along with them, but by letting their popular church discipline, formerly found in the National Church, and still found in the affections and practice of a good part of the nation, appear in the National Church once more; and thus to bring Nonconformists into contact again, as their greater fathers were, with the main stream of national life? Why should not a Presbyterian or Congregational Church, based on this considerable and important, though not essential principle, of the congregation's power in the church management, be established,—with equal rank for its chiefs with the chiefs of Episcopacy, and with

admissibility of its ministers, under a revised system of patronage and preferment, to benefices,—side by side with the Episcopal Church, as the Calvinist and Lutheran Churches are established side by side in France and Germany? Such a Congregational Church would unite the main bodies of Protestants who are now separatists; and separation would cease to be the law of their religious order. Then,—through this concession on a really considerable point of difference,—that endless splitting into hole-and-corner churches on quite inconsiderable points of difference, which must prevail so long as separatism is the first law of a Nonconformist's religious existence, would be checked. Culture would then find a place among English followers of the popular authority of elders, as it has long found it among the followers of Episcopal jurisdiction; and this we should gain by merely recognising, regularising, and restoring an element which appeared once in the reformed National Church, and which is considerable and national enough to have a sound claim to appear there still.

So far, then, is culture from making us unjust to the Nonconformists because it forbids us to worship their fetishes, that it even leads us to propose to do more for them than they themselves venture to claim. It leads us, also, to respect what is solid and respectable in their convictions, while their latitudinarian friends make light of it. Not that the forms in which the human spirit tries to express the inexpressible, or the forms by which man tries to worship, have or can have, as has been said, for the follower of perfection, anything necessary or eternal. If the New Testament and the practice of the primitive Christians sanctioned the popular form of church government a thousand times more expressly than they do, if the Church since Constantine were a thousand times more of a departure from the scheme of primitive Christianity than it can be shown to be, that does not at all make, as is supposed by men in bondage to the letter, the popular form of church government alone and always sacred and binding, or the work of Constantine a thing to be regretted. What is alone and always sacred and binding for man is the climbing towards his total perfection, and the machinery by which he does this varies in value

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according as it helps him to do it. The planters of Christianity had their roots in deep and rich grounds of human life and achievement, both Jewish and also Greek; and had thus a comparatively firm and wide basis amidst all the vehement inspiration of their mighty movement and change. By their strong inspiration they carried men off the old basis of life and culture, whether Jewish or Greek, and generations arose who had their roots in neither world, and were in contact therefore with no full and great stream of human life. Christianity might have lost herself, if it had not been for some such change as that of the fourth century, in a multitude of hole-and-corner churches like the churches of English Nonconformity after its founders departed; churches without great men, and without furtherance for the higher life of humanity. At a critical moment came Constantine, and placed Christianity,—or let us rather say, placed the human spirit, whose totality was endangered,— in contact with the main current of human life. And his work was justified by its fruits, in men like Augustine and Dante, and indeed in all the great men of Christianity, Catholics or Protestants, ever since. And one may go beyond this. Monsieur Albert Réville, whose religious writings are always interesting, says that the conception which cultivated and philosophical Jews now entertain of Christianity and its founder, is probably destined to become the conception which Christians themselves will entertain. Socinians are fond of saying the same thing about the Socinian conception of Christianity. Even if this were true, it would still have been better for a man, through the last eighteen hundred years, to have been a Christian, and a member of one of the great Christian communions, than to have been a Jew or a Socinian; because the being in contact with the main stream of human life is of more moment for a man's total spiritual growth, and for his bringing to perfection the gifts committed to him, which is his business on earth, than any speculative opinion which he may hold or think he holds. Luther,—whom we have called a Philistine of genius, and who, because he was a Philistine, had a coarseness and lack of spiritual delicacy which have harmed his disciples, but who, because he was a genius, had splendid flashes of spiritual insight,—Luther says admirably in his Commentary on the Book of

Daniel: "A God is simply *that* whereon the human heart rests with trust, faith, hope and love. If the resting is right, then the God too is right; if the resting is wrong, then the God too is illusory." In other words, the worth of what a man thinks about God and the objects of religion depends on what the man *is*; and what the man *is*, depends upon his having more or less reached the measure of a perfect and total man.

All this is true; and yet culture, as we have seen, has more tenderness for scruples of the Nonconformists than have their Broad Church friends. That is because culture, disinterestedly trying, in its aim at perfection, to see things as they really are, sees how worthy and divine a thing is the religious side in man, though it is not the whole of man. And when Mr Greg, who differs from us about edification, (and certainly we do not seem likely to agree with him as to what edifies), finding himself moved by some extraneous considerations or other to take a Church's part against its enemies, calls taking a Church's part *returning to base uses*, culture teaches us how out of place is this language, and that to use it shows an inadequate conception of human nature, and that no Church will thank a man for taking its part in this fashion, but will leave him with indifference to the tender mercies of his Benthamite friends. But avoiding Benthamism, or an inadequate conception of the religious side in man, culture makes us also avoid Mialism, or an inadequate conception of man's totality. Therefore to the worth and grandeur of the religious side in man, culture is rejoiced and willing to pay any tribute, except the tribute of man's totality. True, the order and liturgy of the Church of England one may be well contented to live and to die with, and they are such as to inspire an affectionate and revering attachment. True, the reproaches of Nonconformists against this order for "retaining badges of Antichristian recognisance;" and for "corrupting the right form of Church polity with manifold Popish rites and ceremonies;" true, their assertion of the essentialness of their own supposed Scriptural order, and their belief in its eternal fitness, are founded on illusion. True, the whole attitude of horror and holy superiority assumed by Puritanism towards the Church of Rome, is wrong and false,

and well merits Sir Henry Wotton's rebuke:—"Take heed of thinking that the farther you go from the Church of Rome, the nearer you are to God." True, one of the best wishes one could form for Mr Spurgeon or Father Jackson is, that they might be permitted to learn on this side the grave (for if they do not, a considerable surprise is certainly reserved for them on the other) that Whitfield and Wesley were not at all better than St Francis, and that they themselves are not at all better than Lacordaire. Yet, in spite of all this, so noble and divine a thing is religion, so respectable is that earnestness which desires a prayer-book with one strain of doctrine, so attaching is the order and discipline by which we are used to have our religion conveyed, so many claims on our regard has that popular form of church government for which Nonconformists contend, so perfectly compatible is it with all progress towards perfection, that culture would make us shy even to propose to Nonconformists the acceptance of the Anglican prayer-book and the episcopal order; and would be forward to wish them a prayer-book of their own approving, and the church discipline to which they are attached and accustomed.

Only not at the price of Mialism; that is, of a doctrine which leaves the Nonconformists in holes and corners, out of contact with the main current of national life. One can lay one's finger, indeed, on the line by which this doctrine has grown up, and see how the essential part of Nonconformity is a popular church-discipline analogous to that of the other reformed churches, and how its voluntaryism is an accident. It contended for the establishment of its own church-discipline as the only true one; and beaten in this contention, and seeing its rival established, it came down to the more plausible proposal "to place all good men alike in a condition of religious equality;" and this plan of proceeding, originally taken as a mere second-best, became, by long sticking to it and preaching it up, first fair, then righteous, then the only righteous, then at last necessary to salvation. This is the plan for remedying the Nonconformists' divorce from contact with the national life by divorcing churchmen too from contact with it; that is, as we have familiarly before put it, the tailless foxes are for cutting off tails all round. But this

the other foxes could not wisely grant, unless it were proved that tails are of no value. And so, too, unless it is proved that contact with the main current of national life is of no value (and we have shown that it is of the greatest value), we cannot safely, even to please the Nonconformists in a matter where we would please them as much as possible, admit Mialism.

But now, as we have shown the disinterestedness which culture enjoins, and its obedience not to likings or dislikings, but to the aim of perfection, let us show its flexibility,—its independence of machinery. That other and greater prophet of intelligence, and reason, and the simple natural truth of things,—Mr Bright,—means by these, as we have seen, a certain set of measures which suit the special ends of Liberal and Nonconformist partisans. For instance, reason and justice towards Ireland mean the abolishment of the iniquitous Protestant ascendency in such a particular way as to suit the Nonconformists' antipathy to establishments. Reason and justice pursued in a different way, by distributing among the three main Churches of Ireland,—the Roman Catholic, the Anglican, and the Presbyterian,—the church property of Ireland, would immediately cease, for Mr Bright and the Nonconformists, to be reason and justice at all, and would become, as Mr Spurgeon says, "a setting up of the Roman image." Thus we see that the sort of intelligence reached by culture is more disinterested than the sort of intelligence reached by belonging to the Liberal party in the great towns, and taking a commendable interest in politics. But still more striking is the difference between the two views of intelligence, when we see that culture not only makes a quite disinterested choice of the machinery proper to carry us towards sweetness and light, and to make reason and the will of God prevail, but by even this machinery does not hold stiffly and blindly, and easily passes on beyond it to that for the sake of which it chose it.

For instance: culture leads us to think that the ends of human perfection might be best served by establishing,—that is, by bringing into contact with the main current of the national life,—in Ireland the Roman Catholic and the Presbyterian Churches along with the Anglican Church; and, in England, a Presbyterian or

Congregational Church of like rank and *status* with our Episcopalian one. It leads us to think that we should really, in this way, be working to make reason and the will of God prevail; because we should be making Roman Catholics better citizens, and Nonconformists,—nay, and Churchmen along with them,—larger-minded and more complete men. But undoubtedly there are great difficulties in such a plan as this; and the plan is not one which looks very likely to be adopted. It is a plan more for a time of creative statesmen, like the time of Elizabeth, than for a time of instrumental statesmen like the present. The Churchman must rise above his ordinary self in order to favour it; and the Nonconformist has worshipped his fetish of separatism so long that he is likely to wish still to remain, like Ephraim, "a wild ass alone by himself." The centre of power being where it is, our instrumental statesmen have every temptation, as is shown more at large in the following essay, in the first place, to "relieve themselves," as *The Times* says, "of troublesome and irritating responsibilities;" in the second place, when they must act, to go along, as they do, with the ordinary self of those on whose favour they depend, to adopt as their own its desires, and to serve them with fidelity, and even, if possible, with impulsiveness. This is the more easy for them, because there are not wanting,—and there never will be wanting,—thinkers like Mr Baxter, Mr Charles Buxton, and the Dean of Canterbury, to swim with the stream, but to swim with it philosophically; to call the desires of the ordinary self of any great section of the community edicts of the national mind and laws of human progress, and to give them a general, a philosophic, and an imposing expression. A generous statesman may honestly, therefore, soon unlearn any disposition to put his tongue in his cheek in advocating these desires, and may advocate them with fervour and impulsiveness. Therefore a plan such as that which we have indicated does not seem a plan so likely to find favour as a plan for abolishing the Irish Church by the power of the Nonconformists' antipathy to establishments.

But to tell us that our fond dreams are on that account shattered is inexact, and is the sort of language which ought to be addressed to the promoters of

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intelligence through public meetings and a commendable interest in politics, when they fail in their designs, and not to us. For we are fond stickers to no machinery, not even our own; and we have no doubt that perfection can be reached without it,—with free churches as with established churches, and with instrumental statesmen as with creative statesmen. But it can never be reached without seeing things as they really are; and it is to this, therefore, and to no machinery in the world, that culture sticks fondly. It insists that men should not mistake, as they are prone to mistake, their natural taste for the bathos for a relish for the sublime; and if statesmen, either with their tongue in their cheek or through a generous impulsiveness, tell them their natural taste for the bathos is a relish for the sublime, there is the more need for culture to tell them the contrary. It is delusion on this point which is fatal, and against delusion on this point culture works. It is not fatal to our Liberal friends to labour for free trade, extension of the suffrage, and abolition of church-rates, instead of graver social ends; but it is fatal to them to be told by their flatterers, and to believe, with our pauperism increasing more rapidly than our population, that they have performed a great, an heroic work, by occupying themselves exclusively, for the last thirty years, with these Liberal nostrums, and that the right and good course for them now is to go on occupying themselves with the like for the future. It is not fatal to Americans to have no religious establishments and no effective centres of high culture; but it is fatal to them to be told by their flatterers, and to believe, that they are the most intelligent people in the whole world, when of intelligence, in the true and fruitful sense of the word, they even singularly, as we have seen, come short. It is not fatal to the Nonconformists to remain with their separated churches; but it is fatal to them to be told by their flatterers, and to believe, that theirs is the one pure and Christ-ordained way of worshipping God, that provincialism and loss of totality have not come to them from following it, or that provincialism and loss of totality are not evils. It is not fatal to the English nation to abolish the Irish Church by the power of the Nonconformists' antipathy to establishments; but it is fatal to it to be told by its flatterers, and to believe, that it is abolishing it through reason and

justice, when it is really abolishing it through this power; or to expect the fruits of reason and justice from anything but the spirit of reason and justice themselves.

Now culture, because of its keen sense of what is really fatal, is all the more disposed to be pliant and easy about what is not fatal. And because machinery is the bane of politics, and an inward working, and not machinery, is what we most want, we keep advising our ardent young Liberal friends to think less of machinery, to stand more aloof from the arena of politics at present, and rather to try and promote, with us, an inward working. They do not listen to us, and they rush into the arena of politics, where their merits, indeed, seem to be little appreciated as yet; and then they complain of the reformed constituencies, and call the new Parliament a Philistine Parliament. As if a nation, nourished and reared in Hebraising, could give us, just yet, anything better than a Philistine Parliament!—for would a Barbarian Parliament be even so good, or a Populace Parliament? For our part, we rejoice to see our dear old friends, the Hebraising Philistines, gathered in force in the Valley of Jehoshaphat before their final conversion, which will certainly come; but for this conversion we must not try to oust them from their places, and to contend for machinery with them, but we must work on them inwardly and cure them of Hebraising.

Yet *the days of Israel are innumerable*; and in its blame of Hebraising too, and in its praise of Hellenising, culture must not fail to keep its flexibility, and to give to its judgments that passing and provisional character which we have seen it impose on its preferences and rejections of machinery. Now, and for us, it is a time to Hellenise, and to praise knowing; for we have Hebraised too much, and have over-valued doing. But the habits and discipline received from Hebraism remain for our race an eternal possession; and, as humanity is constituted, one must never assign them the second rank to-day, without being ready to restore them to the first rank to-morrow. To walk staunchly by the best light one has, to be strict and sincere with oneself, not to be of the number of those who say and do not, to be in earnest,—this is the discipline by which alone man is enabled to rescue his life from thraldom to the

passing moment and to his bodily senses, to ennoble it, and to make it eternal. And this discipline has been nowhere so effectively taught as in the school of Hebraism. Sophocles and Plato knew as well as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews that "without holiness no man shall see God," and their notion of what goes to make up holiness was larger than his. But the intense and convinced energy with which the Hebrew, both of the Old and of the New Testament, threw himself upon his ideal, and which inspired the incomparable definition of the great Christian virtue, Faith,—*the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*,—this energy of faith in its ideal has belonged to Hebraism alone. As our idea of holiness enlarges, and our scope of perfection widens beyond the narrow limits to which the over-rigour of Hebraising has tended to confine it, we shall come again to Hebraism for that devout energy in embracing our ideal, which alone can give to man the happiness of doing what he knows. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them!"—the last word for infirm humanity will always be that. For this word, reiterated with a power now sublime, now affecting, but always admirable, our race will, as long as the world lasts, return to Hebraism; and the Bible, which preaches this word, will forever remain, as Goethe called it, not only a national book, but the Book of the Nations. Again and again, after what seemed breaches and separations, the prophetic promise to Jerusalem will still be true:—*Lo, thy sons come, whom thou sentest away; they come gathered from the west unto the east by the word of the Holy One, rejoicing in the remembrance of God.*

Note.

* "Les pays qui comme les États-Unis ont créé un enseignement populaire considérable sans instruction supérieure sérieuse, expieront longtemps encore leur faute par leur médiocrité intellectuelle, leur grossièreté de moeurs, leur esprit superficiel, leur manque d'intelligence générale."

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Introduction.

In one of his speeches a year or two ago, that fine speaker and famous Liberal, Mr Bright, took occasion to have a fling at the friends and preachers of culture. "People who talk about what they call *culture*!" said he contemptuously; "by which they mean a smattering of the two dead languages of Greek and Latin." And he went on to remark, in a strain with which modern speakers and writers have made us very familiar, how poor a thing this culture is, how little good it can do to the world, and how absurd it is for its possessors to set much store by it. And the other day a younger Liberal than Mr Bright, one of a school whose mission it is to bring into order and system that body of truth of which the earlier Liberals merely touched the outside, a member of the University of Oxford, and a very clever writer, Mr Frederic Harrison, developed, in the systematic and stringent manner of his school, the thesis which Mr Bright had propounded in only general terms. "Perhaps the very silliest cant of the day," said Mr Frederic Harrison, "is the cant about culture. Culture is a desirable quality in a critic of new books, and sits well on a possessor of *belles lettres*; but as applied to politics, it means simply a turn for small faultfinding, love of selfish ease, and indecision in action. The man of culture is in politics one of the poorest mortals alive. For simple pedantry and want of good sense no man is his equal. No assumption is too unreal, no end is too unpractical for him. But the active exercise of politics requires common sense, sympathy, trust, resolution and enthusiasm, qualities which your man of culture has carefully rooted up, lest they damage the delicacy of his critical olfactories. Perhaps they are the only class of responsible beings in the community who cannot with safety be entrusted with power."

Now for my part I do not wish to see men of culture asking to be entrusted with power; and, indeed, I have freely said, that in my opinion the speech most proper, at present, for a man of culture to make to a body of his fellow-countrymen who get him into a committee-room, is Socrates's: *Know thyself*! and this is not a

speech to be made by men wanting to be entrusted with power. For this very indifference to direct political action I have been taken to task by the *Daily Telegraph*, coupled, by a strange perversity of fate, with just that very one of the Hebrew prophets whose style I admire the least, and called "an elegant Jeremiah." It is because I say (to use the words which the *Daily Telegraph* puts in my mouth):—"You mustn't make a fuss because you have no vote,—that is vulgarity; you mustn't hold big meetings to agitate for reform bills and to repeal corn laws,—that is the very height of vulgarity,"—it is for this reason that I am called, sometimes an elegant Jeremiah, sometimes a spurious Jeremiah, a Jeremiah about the reality of whose mission the writer in the *Daily Telegraph* has his doubts. It is evident, therefore, that I have so taken my line as not to be exposed to the whole brunt of Mr Frederic Harrison's censure. Still, I have often spoken in praise of culture; I have striven to make all my works and ways serve the interests of culture; I take culture to be something a great deal more than what Mr Frederic Harrison and others call it: "a desirable quality in a critic of new books." Nay, even though to a certain extent I am disposed to agree with Mr Frederic Harrison, that men of culture are just the class of responsible beings in this community of ours who cannot properly, at present, be entrusted with power, I am not sure that I do not think this the fault of our community rather than of the men of culture. In short, although, like Mr Bright and Mr Frederic Harrison, and the editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, and a large body of valued friends of mine, I am a liberal, yet I am a liberal tempered by experience, reflection, and renouncement, and I am, above all, a believer in culture. Therefore I propose now to try and enquire, in the simple unsystematic way which best suits both my taste and my powers, what culture really is, what good it can do, what is our own special need of it; and I shall seek to find some plain grounds on which a faith in culture—both my own faith in it and the faith of others,—may rest securely.

Chapter I.

The disparagers of culture make its motive curiosity; sometimes, indeed, they make its motive mere exclusiveness and vanity. The culture which is supposed to plume itself on a smattering of Greek and Latin is a culture which is begotten by nothing so intellectual as curiosity; it is valued either out of sheer vanity and ignorance, or else as an engine of social and class distinction, separating its holder, like a badge or title, from other people who have not got it. No serious man would call this *culture*, or attach any value to it, as culture, at all. To find the real ground for the very differing estimate which serious people will set upon culture, we must find some motive for culture in the terms of which may lie a real ambiguity; and such a motive the word *curiosity* gives us. I have before now pointed out that in English we do not, like the foreigners, use this word in a good sense as well as in a bad sense; with us the word is always used in a somewhat disapproving sense; a liberal and intelligent eagerness about the things of the mind may be meant by a foreigner when he speaks of curiosity, but with us the word always conveys a certain notion of frivolous and unedifying activity. In the *Quarterly Review*, some little time ago, was an estimate of the celebrated French critic, Monsieur Sainte-Beuve, and a very inadequate estimate it, in my judgment, was. And its inadequacy consisted chiefly in this: that in our English way it left out of sight the double sense really involved in the word *curiosity*, thinking enough was said to stamp Monsieur Sainte-Beuve with blame if it was said that he was impelled in his operations as a critic by curiosity, and omitting either to perceive that Monsieur Sainte-Beuve himself, and many other people with him, would consider that this was praiseworthy and not blameworthy, or to point out why it ought really to be accounted worthy of blame and not of praise. For as there is a curiosity about intellectual matters which is futile, and merely a disease, so there is certainly a curiosity,—a desire after the things of the mind simply for their own sakes and for the pleasure of seeing them as they are,—which is, in an intelligent being, natural and laudable. Nay, and the very desire to

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see things as they are implies a balance and regulation of mind which is not often attained without fruitful effort, and which is the very opposite of the blind and diseased impulse of mind which is what we mean to blame when we blame curiosity. Montesquieu says:—"The first motive which ought to impel us to study is the desire to augment the excellence of our nature, and to render an intelligent being yet more intelligent." This is the true ground to assign for the genuine scientific passion, however manifested, and for culture, viewed simply as a fruit of this passion; and it is a worthy ground, even though we let the term *curiosity* stand to describe it.

But there is of culture another view, in which not solely the scientific passion, the sheer desire to see things as they are, natural and proper in an intelligent being, appears as the ground of it. There is a view in which all the love of our neighbour, the impulses towards action, help, and beneficence, the desire for stopping human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing the sum of human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it,—motives eminently such as are called social,—come in as part of the grounds of culture, and the main and pre-eminent part. **Culture is then properly described not as having its origin in curiosity, but as having its origin in the love of perfection; it is a *study of perfection*.** It moves by the force, not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good. As, in the first view of it, we took for its worthy motto Montesquieu's words: "To render an intelligent being yet more intelligent!" so, in the second view of it, there is no better motto which it can have than these words of Bishop Wilson: "To make reason and the will of God prevail!" Only, whereas the passion for doing good is apt to be overhasty in determining what reason and the will of God say, because its turn is for acting rather than thinking, and it wants to be beginning to act; and whereas it is apt to take its own conceptions, which proceed from its own state of development and share in all the imperfections and immaturities of this, for a basis of action; what distinguishes culture is, that it is possessed by the scientific passion, as well as by the

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passion of doing good; that it has worthy notions of reason and the will of God, and does not readily suffer its own crude conceptions to substitute themselves for them; and that, knowing that no action or institution can be salutary and stable which are not based on reason and the will of God, it is not so bent on acting and instituting, even with the great aim of diminishing human error and misery ever before its thoughts, but that it can remember that acting and instituting are of little use, unless we know how and what we ought to act and to institute.

This culture is more interesting and more far-reaching than that other, which is founded solely on the scientific passion for knowing. But it needs times of faith and ardour, times when the intellectual horizon is opening and widening all round us, to flourish in. And is not the close and bounded intellectual horizon within which we have long lived and moved now lifting up, and are not new lights finding free passage to shine in upon us? For a long time there was no passage for them to make their way in upon us, and then it was of no use to think of adapting the world's action to them. Where was the hope of making reason and the will of God prevail among people who had a routine which they had christened reason and the will of God, in which they were inextricably bound, and beyond which they had no power of looking? But now the iron force of adhesion to the old routine,—social, political, religious,—has wonderfully yielded; the iron force of exclusion of all which is new has wonderfully yielded; the danger now is, not that people should obstinately refuse to allow anything but their old routine to pass for reason and the will of God, but either that they should allow some novelty or other to pass for these too easily, or else that they should underrate the importance of them altogether, and think it enough to follow action for its own sake, without troubling themselves to make reason and the will of God prevail therein. Now, then, is the moment for culture to be of service, culture which believes in making reason and the will of God prevail, believes in perfection, is the study and pursuit of perfection, and is no longer debarred, by a rigid invincible exclusion of whatever is new, from getting acceptance for its ideas, simply because they are new.

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The moment this view of culture is seized, the moment it is regarded not solely as the endeavour to see things as they are, to draw towards a knowledge of the universal order which seems to be intended and aimed at in the world, and which it is a man's happiness to go along with or his misery to go counter to,—to learn, in short, the will of God,—the moment, I say, culture is considered not merely as the endeavour to *see* and *learn* this, but as the endeavour, also, to make it *prevail*, the moral, social, and beneficent character of culture becomes manifest. The mere endeavour to see and learn it for our own personal satisfaction is indeed a commencement for making it prevail, a preparing the way for this, which always serves this, and is wrongly, therefore, stamped with blame absolutely in itself, and not only in its caricature and degeneration. But perhaps it has got stamped with blame, and disparaged with the dubious title of curiosity, because in comparison with this wider endeavour of such great and plain utility it looks selfish, petty, and unprofitable.

And religion, the greatest and most important of the efforts by which the human race has manifested its impulse to perfect itself,— religion, that voice of the deepest human experience,—does not only enjoin and sanction the aim which is the great aim of culture, the aim of setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail; but also, in determining generally in what human perfection consists, religion comes to a conclusion identical with that which culture,—seeking the determination of this question through all the voices of human experience which have been heard upon it, art, science, poetry, philosophy, history, as well as religion, in order to give a greater fulness and certainty to its solution,— likewise reaches. Religion says: *The kingdom of God is within you*, and culture, in like manner, places human perfection in an *internal* condition, in the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality, in the ever-increasing efficaciousness and in the general harmonious expansion of those gifts of thought and feeling which make the peculiar dignity, wealth, and happiness of human nature. As I have said on a former occasion: "It is in making endless additions to

itself, in the endless expansion of its powers, in endless growth in wisdom and beauty, that the spirit of the human race finds its ideal. To reach this ideal, culture is an indispensable aid, and that is the true value of culture." Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture conceives it; and here, too, it coincides with religion. And because men are all members of one great whole, and the sympathy which is in human nature will not allow one member to be indifferent to the rest, or to have a perfect welfare independent of the rest, the expansion of our humanity, to suit the idea of perfection which culture forms, must be a *general* expansion. Perfection, as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated: the individual is obliged, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection, to be continually doing all he can to enlarge and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping thitherward; and here, once more, it lays on us the same obligation as religion, which says, as Bishop Wilson has admirably put it, that "to promote the kingdom of God is to increase and hasten one's own happiness." Finally, perfection,—as culture, from a thorough disinterested study of human nature and human experience, learns to conceive it,—is an harmonious expansion of *all* the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature, and is not consistent with the over-development of any one power at the expense of the rest. Here it goes beyond religion, as religion is generally conceived by us.

If culture, then, is a study of perfection, and of harmonious perfection, general perfection, and perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances,—it is clear that culture, instead of being the frivolous and useless thing which Mr Bright, and Mr Frederic Harrison, and many other liberals are apt to call it, has a very important function to fulfil for mankind. And this function is particularly important in our modern world, of which the whole civilisation is, to a much greater degree than the civilisation of Greece and Rome,

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mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more so. But above all in our own country has culture a weighty part to perform, because here that mechanical character, which civilisation tends to take everywhere, is shown in the most eminent degree. Indeed nearly all the characters of perfection, as culture teaches us to fix them, meet in this country with some powerful tendency which thwarts them and sets them at defiance. The idea of perfection as an *inward* condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilisation in esteem with us, and nowhere, as I have said, so much in esteem as with us. The idea of perfection as a *general* expansion of the human family is at variance with our strong individualism, our hatred of all limits to the unrestrained swing of the individual's personality, our maxim of "every man for himself." The idea of perfection as an *harmonious* expansion of human nature is at variance with our want of flexibility, with our inaptitude for seeing more than one side of a thing, with our intense energetic absorption in the particular pursuit we happen to be following. So culture has a rough task to achieve in this country, and its preachers have, and are likely long to have, a hard time of it, and they will much oftener be regarded, for a great while to come, as elegant or spurious Jeremiahs, than as friends and benefactors. That, however, will not prevent their doing in the end good service if they persevere; and meanwhile, the mode of action they have to pursue, and the sort of habits they must fight against, should be made quite clear to every one who may be willing to look at the matter attentively and dispassionately.

Faith in machinery is, I said, our besetting danger; often in machinery most absurdly disproportioned to the end which this machinery, if it is to do any good at all, is to serve; but always in machinery, as if it had a value in and for itself. What is freedom but machinery? what is population but machinery? what is coal but machinery? what are railroads but machinery? what is wealth but machinery? what are religious organisations but machinery? Now almost every voice in England is accustomed to speak of these things as if they were precious ends in themselves, and therefore had some of the characters of perfection indisputably joined to them. I

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have once before noticed Mr Roebuck's stock argument for proving the greatness and happiness of England as she is, and for quite stopping the mouths of all gainsayers. Mr Roebuck is never weary of reiterating this argument of his, so I do not know why I should be weary of noticing it. "May not every man in England say what he likes?"—Mr Roebuck perpetually asks; and that, he thinks, is quite sufficient, and when every man may say what he likes, our aspirations ought to be satisfied. But the aspirations of culture, which is the study of perfection, are not satisfied, unless what men say, when they may say what they like, is worth saying,—has good in it, and more good than bad. In the same way *The Times*, replying to some foreign strictures on the dress, looks, and behaviour of the English abroad, urges that the English ideal is that every one should be free to do and to look just as he likes. But culture indefatigably tries, not to make what each raw person may like, the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful, and becoming, and to get the raw person to like that. And in the same way with respect to railroads and coal. Every one must have observed the strange language current during the late discussions as to the possible failure of our supplies of coal. Our coal, thousands of people were saying, is the real basis of our national greatness; if our coal runs short, there is an end of the greatness of England. But what is greatness?— culture makes us ask. Greatness is a spiritual condition worthy to excite love, interest, and admiration; and the outward proof of possessing greatness is that we excite love, interest, and admiration. If England were swallowed up by the sea to-morrow, which of the two, a hundred years hence, would most excite the love, interest, and admiration of mankind,—would most, therefore, show the evidences of having possessed greatness,—the England of the last twenty years, or the England of Elizabeth, of a time of splendid spiritual effort, but when our coal, and our industrial operations depending on coal, were very little developed? Well then, what an unsound habit of mind it must be which makes us talk of things like coal or iron as constituting the greatness of England, and how salutary a friend is

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culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and thus dissipating delusions of this kind and fixing standards of perfection that are real!

Wealth, again, that end to which our prodigious works for material advantage are directed,—the commonest of commonplaces tells us how men are always apt to regard wealth as a precious end in itself; and certainly they have never been so apt thus to regard it as they are in England at the present time. Never did people believe anything more firmly, than nine Englishmen out of ten at the present day believe that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being so very rich. Now, the use of culture is that it helps us, by means of its spiritual standard of perfection, to regard wealth as but machinery, and not only to say as a matter of words that we regard wealth as but machinery, but really to perceive and feel that it is so. If it were not for this purging effect wrought upon our minds by culture, the whole world, the future as well as the present, would inevitably belong to the Philistines. The people who believe most that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being very rich, and who most give their lives and thoughts to becoming rich, are just the very people whom we call the Philistines. Culture says: "Consider these people, then, their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tones of their voice; look at them attentively; observe the literature they read, the things which give them pleasure, the words which come forth out of their mouths, the thoughts which make the furniture of their minds; would any amount of wealth be worth having with the condition that one was to become just like these people by having it?" And thus culture begets a dissatisfaction which is of the highest possible value in stemming the common tide of men's thoughts in a wealthy and industrial community, and which saves the future, as one may hope, from being vulgarised, even if it cannot save the present.

Population, again, and bodily health and vigour, are things which are nowhere treated in such an unintelligent, misleading, exaggerated way as in England. Both are really machinery; yet how many people all around us do we see rest in them and fail to look beyond them! Why, I have heard people, fresh from reading certain articles of *The Times* on the Registrar-General's returns of marriages

and births in this country, who would talk of large families in quite a solemn strain, as if they had something in itself beautiful, elevating, and meritorious in them; as if the British Philistine would have only to present himself before the Great Judge with his twelve children, in order to be received among the sheep as a matter of right! But bodily health and vigour, it may be said, are not to be classed with wealth and population as mere machinery; they have a more real and essential value. True; but only as they are more intimately connected with a perfect spiritual condition than wealth or population are. The moment we disjoin them from the idea of a perfect spiritual condition, and pursue them, as we do pursue them, for their own sake and as ends in themselves, our worship of them becomes as mere worship of machinery, as our worship of wealth or population, and as unintelligent and vulgarising a worship as that is. Every one with anything like an adequate idea of human perfection has distinctly marked this subordination to higher and spiritual ends of the cultivation of bodily vigour and activity. "Bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things," says the author of the Epistle to Timothy. And the utilitarian Franklin says just as explicitly:—"Eat and drink such an exact quantity as suits the constitution of thy body, *in reference to the services of the mind*." But the point of view of culture, keeping the mark of human perfection simply and broadly in view, and not assigning to this perfection, as religion or utilitarianism assign to it, a special and limited character,—this point of view, I say, of culture is best given by these words of Epictetus:—"It is a sign of '*φυ*," says he,—that is, of a nature not finely tempered,—"to give yourselves up to things which relate to the body; to make, for instance, a great fuss about exercise, a great fuss about eating, a great fuss about drinking, a great fuss about walking, a great fuss about riding. All these things ought to be done merely *by the way*: the formation of the spirit and character must be our real concern. "This is admirable; and, indeed, the Greek words '*φυ, εὐφυ*, a finely tempered nature, a coarsely tempered nature, give exactly the notion of perfection as culture brings us to conceive of it: a perfection in which the characters of beauty and intelligence are both present, which unites "the two noblest

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of things,"—as Swift, who of one of the two, at any rate, had himself all too little, most happily calls them in his *Battle of the Books*,—"the two noblest of things, *sweetness and light*." The *εὐφυής* is the man who tends towards sweetness and light; the *'φυής* is precisely our Philistine. The immense spiritual significance of the Greeks is due to their having been inspired with this central and happy idea of the essential character of human perfection; and Mr Bright's misconception of culture, as a smattering of Greek and Latin, comes itself, after all, from this wonderful significance of the Greeks having affected the very machinery of our education, and is in itself a kind of homage to it.

It is by thus making sweetness and light to be characters of perfection, that culture is of like spirit with poetry, follows one law with poetry. I have called religion a more important manifestation of human nature than poetry, because it has worked on a broader scale for perfection, and with greater masses of men. But the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all its sides, which is the dominant idea of poetry, is a true and invaluable idea, though it has not yet had the success that the idea of conquering the obvious faults of our animality, and of a human nature perfect on the moral side, which is the dominant idea of religion, has been enabled to have; and it is destined, adding to itself the religious idea of a devout energy, to transform and govern the other. The best art and poetry of the Greeks, in which religion and poetry are one, in which the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all sides adds to itself a religious and devout energy, and works in the strength of that, is on this account of such surpassing interest and instructiveness for us, though it was,—as, having regard to the human race in general, and, indeed, having regard to the Greeks themselves, we must own,—a premature attempt, an attempt which for success needed the moral and religious fibre in humanity to be more braced and developed than it had yet been. But Greece did not err in having the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, so present and paramount; it is impossible to have this idea too present and paramount; only the moral fibre must be braced too. And we, because we have braced the moral fibre, are

not on that account in the right way, if at the same time the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, is wanting or misapprehended amongst us; and evidently it is wanting or misapprehended at present. And when we rely as we do on our religious organisations, which in themselves do not and cannot give us this idea, and think we have done enough if we make them spread and prevail, then, I say, we fall into our common fault of overvaluing machinery.

Nothing is more common than for people to confound the inward peace and satisfaction which follows the subduing of the obvious faults of our animality with what I may call absolute inward peace and satisfaction,—the peace and satisfaction which are reached as we draw near to complete spiritual perfection, and not merely to moral perfection, or rather to relative moral perfection. No people in the world have done more and struggled more to attain this relative moral perfection than our English race has; for no people in the world has the command to *resist the Devil*, to *overcome the Wicked One*, in the nearest and most obvious sense of those words, had such a pressing force and reality. And we have had our reward, not only in the great worldly prosperity which our obedience to this command has brought us, but also, and far more, in great inward peace and satisfaction. But to me few things are more pathetic than to see people, on the strength of the inward peace and satisfaction which their rudimentary efforts towards perfection have brought them, use, concerning their incomplete perfection and the religious organisations within which they have found it, language which properly applies only to complete perfection, and is a far-off echo of the human soul's prophecy of it. Religion itself, I need hardly say, supplies in abundance this grand language, which is really the severest criticism of such an incomplete perfection as alone we have yet reached through our religious organisations.

The impulse of the English race towards moral development and self-conquest has nowhere so powerfully manifested itself as in Puritanism; nowhere has Puritanism found so adequate an expression as in the religious organisation of the Independents. The modern Independents have a newspaper, the *Nonconformist*,

written with great sincerity and ability. The motto, the standard, the profession of faith which this organ of theirs carries aloft, is: “The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion.” There is sweetness and light, and an ideal of complete harmonious human perfection! One need not go to culture and poetry to find language to judge it. Religion, with its instinct for perfection, supplies language to judge it: “Finally, be of one mind, united in feeling,” says St Peter. There is an ideal which judges the Puritan ideal—”The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion!” And religious organisations like this are what people believe in, rest in, would give their lives for! Such, I say, is the wonderful virtue of even the beginnings of perfection, of having conquered even the plain faults of our animality, that the religious organisation which has helped us to do it can seem to us something precious, salutary, and to be propagated, even when it wears such a brand of imperfection on its forehead as this. And men have got such a habit of giving to the language of religion a special application, of making it a mere jargon, that for the condemnation which religion itself passes on the shortcomings of their religious organisations they have no ear; they are sure to cheat themselves and to explain this condemnation away. They can only be reached by the criticism which culture, like poetry, speaking a language not to be sophisticated, and resolutely testing these organisations by the ideal of a human perfection complete on all sides, applies to them.

But men of culture and poetry, it will be said, are again and again failing, and failing conspicuously, in the necessary first stage to perfection, in the subduing of the great obvious faults of our animality, which it is the glory of these religious organisations to have helped us to subdue. True, they do often so fail: they have often been without the virtues as well as the faults of the Puritan; it has been one of their dangers that they so felt the Puritan’s faults that they too much neglected the practice of his virtues. I will not, however, exculpate them at the Puritan’s expense; they have often failed in morality, and morality is indispensable; they have been punished for their failure, as the Puritan has been rewarded for his performance.

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They have been punished wherein they erred; but their ideal of beauty and sweetness and light, and a human nature complete on all its sides, remains the true ideal of perfection still; just as the Puritan's ideal of perfection remains narrow and inadequate, although for what he did well he has been richly rewarded. Notwithstanding the mighty results of the Pilgrim Fathers' voyage, they and their standard of perfection are rightly judged when we figure to ourselves Shakspeare or Virgil,—souls in whom sweetness and light, and all that in human nature is most humane, were eminent,—accompanying them on their voyage, and think what intolerable company Shakspeare and Virgil would have found them! In the same way let us judge the religious organisations which we see all around us. Do not let us deny the good and the happiness which they have accomplished; but do not let us fail to see clearly that their idea of human perfection is narrow and inadequate, and that the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion will never bring humanity to its true goal. As I said with regard to wealth,—let us look at the life of those who live in and for it;—so I say with regard to the religious organisations. Look at the life imaged in such a newspaper as the *Nonconformist*;—a life of jealousy of the Establishment, disputes, tea-meetings, openings of chapels, sermons; and then think of it as an ideal of a human life completing itself on all sides, and aspiring with all its organs after sweetness, light, and perfection!

Another newspaper, representing, like the *Nonconformist*, one of the religious organisations of this country, was a short time ago giving an account of the crowd at Epsom on the Derby day, and of all the vice and hideousness which was to be seen in that crowd; and then the writer turned suddenly round upon Professor Huxley, and asked him how he proposed to cure all this vice and hideousness without religion. I confess I felt disposed to ask the asker this question: And how do you propose to cure it with such a religion as yours? How is the ideal of a life so unlovely, so unattractive, so narrow, so far removed from a true and satisfying ideal of human perfection, as is the life of your religious organisation as you yourself image it, to conquer and transform all this vice and hideousness? Indeed, the

strongest plea for the study of perfection as pursued by culture, the clearest proof of the actual inadequacy of the idea of perfection held by the religious organisations,—expressing, as I have said, the most wide-spread effort which the human race has yet made after perfection,—is to be found in the state of our life and society with these in possession of it, and having been in possession of it I know not how many hundred years. We are all of us included in some religious organisation or other; we all call ourselves, in the sublime and aspiring language of religion which I have before noticed, *children of God*. Children of God;—it is an immense pretension!—and how are we to justify it? By the works which we do, and the words which we speak. And the work which we collective children of God do, our grand centre of life, our *city* which we have builded for us to dwell in, is London! London, with its unutterable external hideousness, and with its internal canker of *publicé egestas*, *privatim opulentia*,—to use the words which Sallust puts into Cato's mouth about Rome,—unequalled in the world! The word, again, which we children of God speak, the voice which most hits our collective thought, the newspaper with the largest circulation in England, nay, with the largest circulation in the whole world, is the *Daily Telegraph*! I say that when our religious organisations,—which I admit to express the most considerable effort after perfection that our race has yet made,—land us in no better result than this, it is high time to examine carefully their idea of perfection, to see whether it does not leave out of account sides and forces of human nature which we might turn to great use; whether it would not be more operative if it were more complete. And I say that the English reliance on our religious organisations and on their ideas of human perfection just as they stand, is like our reliance on freedom, on muscular Christianity, on population, on coal, on wealth,—mere belief in machinery, and unfruitful; and that it is wholesomely counteracted by culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and on drawing the human race onwards to a more complete perfection.

Culture, however, shows its single-minded love of perfection, its desire simply to make reason and the will of God prevail, its freedom from fanaticism, by

its attitude towards all this machinery, even while it insists that it is machinery. Fanatics, seeing the mischief men do themselves by their blind belief in some machinery or other,— whether it is wealth and industrialism, or whether it is the cultivation of bodily strength and activity, or whether it is a political organisation, or whether it is a religious organisation,— oppose with might and main the tendency to this or that political and religious organisation, or to games and athletic exercises, or to wealth and industrialism, and try violently to stop it. But the flexibility which sweetness and light give, and which is one of the rewards of culture pursued in good faith, enables a man to see that a tendency may be necessary, and even, as a preparation for something in the future, salutary, and yet that the generations or individuals who obey this tendency are sacrificed to it, that they fall short of the hope of perfection by following it; and that its mischiefs are to be criticised, lest it should take too firm a hold and last after it has served its purpose. Mr Gladstone well pointed out, in a speech at Paris,—and others have pointed out the same thing,—how necessary is the present great movement towards wealth and industrialism, in order to lay broad foundations of material well-being for the society of the future. The worst of these justifications is, that they are generally addressed to the very people engaged, body and soul, in the movement in question; at all events, that they are always seized with the greatest avidity by these people, and taken by them as quite justifying their life; and that thus they tend to harden them in their sins. Now, culture admits the necessity of the movement towards fortune-making and exaggerated industrialism, readily allows that the future may derive benefit from it; but insists, at the same time, that the passing generations of industrialists,—forming, for the most part, the stout main body of Philistinism,—are sacrificed to it. In the same way, the result of all the games and sports which occupy the passing generation of boys and young men may be the establishment of a better and sounder physical type for the future to work with. Culture does not set itself against the games and sports; it congratulates the future, and hopes it will make a good use of its improved physical basis; but it points out that our passing generation of boys and

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young men is, meantime, sacrificed. Puritanism was necessary to develop the moral fibre of the English race, Nonconformity to break the yoke of ecclesiastical domination over men's minds and to prepare the way for freedom of thought in the distant future; still, culture points out that the harmonious perfection of generations of Puritans and Nonconformists have been, in consequence, sacrificed. Freedom of speech is necessary for the society of the future, but the young lions of the *Daily Telegraph* in the meanwhile are sacrificed. A voice for every man in his country's government is necessary for the society of the future, but meanwhile Mr Beales and Mr Bradlaugh are sacrificed.

Oxford, the Oxford of the past, has many faults; and she has heavily paid for them in defeat, in isolation, in want of hold upon the modern world. Yet we in Oxford, brought up amidst the beauty and sweetness of that beautiful place, have not failed to seize one truth:—the truth that beauty and sweetness are essential characters of a complete human perfection. When I insist on this, I am all in the faith and tradition of Oxford. I say boldly that this our sentiment for beauty and sweetness, our sentiment against hideousness and rawness, has been at the bottom of our attachment to so many beaten causes, of our opposition to so many triumphant movements. And the sentiment is true, and has never been wholly defeated, and has shown its power even in its defeat. We have not won our political battles, we have not carried our main points, we have not stopped our adversaries' advance, we have not marched victoriously with the modern world; but we have told silently upon the mind of the country, we have prepared currents of feeling which sap our adversaries' position when it seems gained, we have kept up our own communications with the future. Look at the course of the great movement which shook Oxford to its centre some thirty years ago! It was directed, as any one who reads Dr Newman's *Apology* may see, against what in one word maybe called "liberalism." Liberalism prevailed; it was the appointed force to do the work of the hour; it was necessary, it was inevitable that it should prevail. The Oxford movement was broken, it failed; our wrecks are scattered on every shore:

Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?

But what was it, this liberalism, as Dr Newman saw it, and as it really broke the Oxford movement? It was the great middle-class liberalism, which had for the cardinal points of its belief the Reform Bill of 1832, and local self-government, in politics; in the social sphere, free-trade, unrestricted competition, and the making of large industrial fortunes; in the religious sphere, the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion. I do not say that other and more intelligent forces than this were not opposed to the Oxford movement: but this was the force which really beat it; this was the force which Dr Newman felt himself fighting with; this was the force which till only the other day seemed to be the paramount force in this country, and to be in possession of the future; this was the force whose achievements fill Mr Lowe with such inexpressible admiration, and whose rule he was so horror-struck to see threatened. And where is this great force of Philistinism now? It is thrust into the second rank, it is become a power of yesterday, it has lost the future. A new power has suddenly appeared, a power which it is impossible yet to judge fully, but which is certainly a wholly different force from middle-class liberalism; different in its cardinal points of belief, different in its tendencies in every sphere. It loves and admires neither the legislation of middle-class Parliaments, nor the local self-government of middle-class vestries, nor the unrestricted competition of middle-class industrialists, nor the dissidence of middle-class Dissent and the Protestantism of middle-class Protestant religion. I am not now praising this new force, or saying that its own ideals are better; all I say is, that they are wholly different. And who will estimate how much the currents of feeling created by Dr Newman's movement, the keen desire for beauty and sweetness which it nourished, the deep aversion it manifested to the hardness and vulgarity of middle-class liberalism, the strong light it turned on the hideous and grotesque illusions of middle-class Protestantism,— who will estimate how much all these contributed to

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swell the tide of secret dissatisfaction which has mined the ground under the self-confident liberalism of the last thirty years, and has prepared the way for its sudden collapse and supersession? It is in this manner that the sentiment of Oxford for beauty and sweetness conquers, and in this manner long may it continue to conquer!

In this manner it works to the same end as culture, and there is plenty of work for it yet to do. I have said that the new and more democratic force which is now superseding our old middle-class liberalism cannot yet be rightly judged. It has its main tendencies still to form. We hear promises of its giving us administrative reform, law reform, reform of education, and I know not what; but those promises come rather from its advocates, wishing to make a good plea for it and to justify it for superseding middle-class liberalism, than from clear tendencies which it has itself yet developed. But meanwhile it has plenty of well-intentioned friends against whom culture may with advantage continue to uphold steadily its ideal of human perfection; that this is *an inward spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy*. Mr Bright, who has a foot in both worlds, the world of middle-class liberalism and the world of democracy, but who brings most of his ideas from the world of middle-class liberalism in which he was bred, always inclines to inculcate that faith in machinery to which, as we have seen, Englishmen are so prone, and which has been the bane of middle-class liberalism. He complains with a sorrowful indignation of people who "appear to have no proper estimate of the value of the franchise;" he leads his disciples to believe,—what the Englishman is always too ready to believe, —that the having a vote, like the having a large family, or a large business, or large muscles, has in itself some edifying and perfecting effect upon human nature. Or else he cries out to the democracy,—"the men," as he calls them, "upon whose shoulders the greatness of England rests,"—he cries out to them: "See what you have done! I look over this country and see the cities you have built, the railroads you have made, the manufactures you have produced, the cargoes which freight the ships of the greatest mercantile navy the world has ever seen! I see that you have converted by your

labours what was once a wilderness, these islands, into a fruitful garden; I know that you have created this wealth, and are a nation whose name is a word of power throughout all the world." Why, this is just the very style of laudation with which Mr Roebuck or Mr Lowe debauch the minds of the middle classes, and make such Philistines of them. It is the same fashion of teaching a man to value himself not on what he *is*, not on his progress in sweetness and light, but on the number of the railroads he has constructed, or the bigness of the Tabernacle he has built. Only the middle classes are told they have done it all with their energy, self-reliance, and capital, and the democracy are told they have done it all with their hands and sinews. But teaching the democracy to put its trust in achievements of this kind is merely training them to be Philistines to take the place of the Philistines whom they are superseding; and they too, like the middle class, will be encouraged to sit down at the banquet of the future without having on a wedding garment, and nothing excellent can then come from them. Those who know their besetting faults, those who have watched them and listened to them, or those who will read the instructive account recently given of them by one of themselves, the *Journeyman Engineer*, will agree that the idea which culture sets before us of perfection,—an increased spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy,—is an idea which the new democracy needs far more than the idea of the blessedness of the franchise, or the wonderfulness of their own industrial performances.

Other well-meaning friends of this new power are for leading it, not in the old ruts of middle-class Philistinism, but in ways which are naturally alluring to the feet of democracy, though in this country they are novel and untried ways. I may call them the ways of Jacobinism. Violent indignation with the past, abstract systems of renovation applied wholesale, a new doctrine drawn up in black and white for elaborating down to the very smallest details a rational society for the future,—these are the ways of Jacobinism. Mr Frederic Harrison and other disciples of Comte,—one of them, Mr Congreve, is an old acquaintance of mine, and I am glad to have an

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opportunity of publicly expressing my respect for his talents and character,—are among the friends of democracy who are for leading it in paths of this kind. Mr Frederic Harrison is very hostile to culture, and from a natural enough motive; for culture is the eternal opponent of the two things which are the signal marks of Jacobinism, − its fierceness, and its addiction to an abstract system. Culture is always assigning to system-makers and systems a smaller share in the bent of human destiny than their friends like. A current in people's minds sets towards new ideas; people are dissatisfied with their old narrow stock of Philistine ideas, Anglo-Saxon ideas, or any other; and some man, some Bentham or Comte, who has the real merit of having early and strongly felt and helped the new current, but who brings plenty of narrownesses and mistakes of his own into his feeling and help of it, is credited with being the author of the whole current, the fit person to be entrusted with its regulation and to guide the human race. The excellent German historian of the mythology of Rome, Preller, relating the introduction at Rome under the Tarquins of the worship of Apollo, the god of light, healing, and reconciliation, observes that it was not so much the Tarquins who brought to Rome the new worship of Apollo, as a current in the mind of the Roman people which set powerfully at that time towards a new worship of this kind, and away from the old run of Latin and Sabine religious ideas. In a similar way, culture directs our attention to the current in human affairs, and to its continual working, and will not let us rivet our faith upon any one man and his doings. It makes us see, not only his good side, but also how much in him was of necessity limited and transient; nay, it even feels a pleasure, a sense of an increased freedom and of an ampler future, in so doing. I remember, when I was under the influence of a mind to which I feel the greatest obligations, the mind of a man who was the very incarnation of sanity and clear sense, a man the most considerable, it seems to me, whom America has yet produced,—Benjamin Franklin,—I remember the relief with which, after long feeling the sway of Franklin's imperturbable common-sense, I came upon a project of his for a new version of the Book of Job, to replace the old version, the style of which, says Franklin, has become

obsolete, and thence less agreeable. "I give," he continues, "a few verses, which may serve as a sample of the kind of version I would recommend." We all recollect the famous verse in our translation: "Then Satan answered the Lord and said: 'Doth Job fear God for nought?'" Franklin makes this: "Does Your Majesty imagine that Job's good conduct is the effect of mere personal attachment and affection?" I well remember how when first I read that, I drew a deep breath of relief, and said to myself: "After all, there is a stretch of humanity beyond Franklin's victorious good sense!" So, after hearing Bentham cried loudly up as the renovator of modern society, and Bentham's mind and ideas proposed as the rulers of our future, I open the *Deontology*. There I read: "While Xenophon was writing his history and Euclid teaching geometry, Socrates and Plato were talking nonsense under pretence of talking wisdom and morality. This morality of theirs consisted in words; this wisdom of theirs was the denial of matters known to every man's experience." From the moment of reading that, I am delivered from the bondage of Bentham! the fanaticism of his adherents can touch me no longer; I feel the inadequacy of his mind and ideas for being the rule of human society, for perfection. Culture tends always thus to deal with the men of a system, of disciples, of a school; with men like Comte, or the late Mr Buckle, or Mr Mill. However much it may find to admire in these personages, or in some of them, it nevertheless remembers the text: "Be not ye called Rabbi!" and it soon passes on from any Rabbi. But Jacobinism loves a Rabbi; it does not want to pass on from its Rabbi in pursuit of a future and still unreached perfection; it wants its Rabbi and his ideas to stand for perfection, that they may with the more authority recast the world; and for Jacobinism, therefore, culture,—eternally passing onwards and seeking,—is an impertinence and an offence. But culture, just because it resists this tendency of Jacobinism to impose on us a man with limitations and errors of his own along with the true ideas of which he is the organ, really does the world and Jacobinism itself a service.

So, too, Jacobinism, in its fierce hatred of the past and of those whom it makes liable for the sins of the past, cannot away with culture,—culture with its

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inexhaustible indulgence, its consideration of circumstances, its severe judgment of actions joined to its merciful judgment of persons. "The man of culture is in politics," cries Mr Frederic Harrison, "one of the poorest mortals alive!" Mr Frederic Harrison wants to be doing business, and he complains that the man of culture stops him with a "turn for small fault-finding, love of selfish ease, and indecision in action." Of what use is culture, he asks, except for "a critic of new books or a professor of *belles lettres*?" Why, it is of use because, in presence of the fierce exasperation which breathes, or rather, I may say, hisses, through the whole production in which Mr Frederic Harrison asks that question, it reminds us that the perfection of human nature is sweetness and light. It is of use because, like religion, − that other effort after perfection,—it testifies that, where bitter envying and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work.

The pursuit of perfection, then, is the pursuit of sweetness and light. He who works for sweetness works in the end for light also; he who works for light works in the end for sweetness also. But he who works for sweetness and light united, works to make reason and the will of God prevail. **He who works for machinery, he who works for hatred, works only for confusion. Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred; culture has but one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light.** Yes, it has one yet greater!— the passion for making them *prevail*. It is not satisfied till we *all* come to a perfect man; it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light. If I have not shrunk from saying that we must work for sweetness and light, so neither have I shrunk from saying that we must have a broad basis, must have sweetness and light for as many as possible. Again and again I have insisted how those are the happy moments of humanity, how those are the marking epochs of a people's life, how those are the flowering times for literature and art and all the creative power of genius, when there is a *national* glow of life and thought, when the whole of society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive. Only it must be *real* thought and *real* beauty; *real*

sweetness and *real* light. Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses. The ordinary popular literature is an example of this way of working on the masses. Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party. Our religious and political organisations give an example of this way of working on the masses. I condemn neither way; but culture works differently. It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgments and watchwords. It seeks to do away with classes; to make all live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, and use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely,—to be nourished and not bound by them.

This is the *social idea*; and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality. The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have laboured to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanise it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the *best* knowledge and thought of the time, and a true source, therefore, of sweetness and light. Such a man was Abelard in the Middle Ages, in spite of all his imperfections; and thence the boundless emotion and enthusiasm which Abelard excited. Such were Lessing and Herder in Germany, at the end of the last century; and their services to Germany were in this way inestimably precious. Generations will pass, and literary monuments will accumulate, and works far more perfect than the works of Lessing and Herder will be produced in Germany; and yet the names of these two men will fill a German with a reverence and enthusiasm such as the names of the most gifted masters will hardly awaken. Because they *humanised* knowledge; because they broadened the basis of life and intelligence; because they worked powerfully to diffuse sweetness and light, to make reason and the will of God prevail. With Saint Augustine they said: "Let us not leave Thee alone to make in the

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secret of thy knowledge, as thou didst before the creation of the firmament, the division of light from darkness; let the children of thy spirit, placed in their firmament, make their light shine upon the earth, mark the division of night and day, and announce the revolution of the times; for the old order is passed, and the new arises; the night is spent, the day is come forth; and thou shalt crown the year with thy blessing, when thou shalt send forth labourers into thy harvest sown by other hands than theirs; when thou shalt send forth new labourers to new seed-times, whereof the harvest shall be not yet."

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1857. Lewis **CARROLL** [Charles Dodgson]. (1832-1898)

Eight or Nine Wise Words about Letter-Writing. written 1890.

1. On Stamp-Cases.

Some American writer has said "the snakes in this district may be divided into one species—the venomous". The same principle applies here. Postage-Stamp-Cases may be divided into one species, the "Wonderland". Imitations of it will soon appear, no doubt: but they cannot include the two Pictorial Surprises, which are copyright.

You don't see why I call them "Surprises"? Well, take the Case in your left-hand, and regard it attentively. You see Alice nursing the Duchess's Baby? (An entirely new combination, by the way: It doesn't occur in the book.) Now, with your right thumb and forefinger, lay hold of the little book, and suddenly pull it out. *The Baby has turned into a Pig!* If *that* doesn't surprise you, why, I suppose you wouldn't be surprised if your own Mother-in-law suddenly turned into a Gyroscope!

This Case is *not* intended to carry about in your pocket. Far from it. People seldom want any other Stamps, on an emergency, than Penny-Stamps for Letters, Sixpenny-Stamps for Telegrams, and a bit of Stamp-edging for cut fingers (it makes capital sticking-plaster, and will stand three or four washings, cautiously conducted): and all these are easily carried in a purse of pocket-book. No, *this* is meant to haunt your envelope-case, or wherever you keep your writing-materials. What made me invent it was the constantly wanting Stamps of other values, for foreign Letters, Parcel Post, etc., and finding it very bothersome to get at the kind I wanted in a hurry. Since I have possessed a "Wonderland Stamp-Case", life has been

bright and peaceful, and I have used no other. I believe the Queen's laundress uses no other.

Each of the pockets will hold 6 stamps, comfortably. I would recommend you to arrange the 6, before putting them in, something like a *bouquet*, making them, lean to the right and to the left alternately: Thus there will always be a free *corner* to get hold of, so as to take them out, quickly and easily, one by one: otherwise you will find them apt to come out two or three at a time.

According to *my* experience, the 5*d*., 9*d*., and 1s. Stamps are hardly ever wanted, though I have constantly to replenish all the other pockets. If your experience agrees with mine, you may find it convenient to keep only a couple (say) of each of these 3 kinds, in the 1s. pocket, and to fill the other 2 pockets with extra 1*d*. stamps.

2. How to Begin a Letter.

If the Letter is to be in answer to another, begin by getting out that other letter and reading it through, in order to refresh your memory, as to what it is you have to answer, and as to your correspondent's *present address* (otherwise you will be sending your letter to his regular address in *London*, though he has been careful in writing to give you his *Torquay* address in full).

Next, Address and Stamp the Envelope. "What! Before writing the *Letter*?" Most certainly. And I'll tell you what will happen if you don't. You will go on writing till the last moment, and, just in the middle of the last sentence, you will become aware that "time's up!" Then comes the hurried wind-up—the wildly-scrawled signature—the hastily-fastened envelope, which comes open in the post—the address, a mere hieroglyphic—the horrible discovery that you've forgotten to replenish your StampCase—the frantic appeal, to every one in the house, to lend you a Stamp—the headlong rush to the Post Office, arriving, hot and gasping, just after

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the box has closed—and finally, a week afterwards, the return of the Letter, from the Dead-Letter Office, marked "address illegible"!

Next, put your own address, *in full*, at the top of the note-sheet, It is an aggravating thing—I speak from bitter experience—when a friend, staying at some new address, heads his letter "Dover", simply, assuming that you can get the rest of the address from his previous letter, which perhaps you have destroyed.

Next, put the date *in full*. It is another aggravating thing, when you wish, years afterwards, to arrange a series of letters, to find them dated "Feb. 17, "Aug. 2", without any *year* to guide you as to which comes first. And never, never, dear Madam (N.B. this remark is addressed to ladies *only*: no *man* would ever do such a. thing), put "Wednesday", simply, as the date!

"That way madness lies."

3. How to Go On with a Letter.

Here is a golden Rule to begin with. *Write legibly*. The average temper of the human race would be perceptibly sweetened, if everybody obeyed this Rule! A great deal of the bad writing in the world comes simply from writing *too quickly*. Of course you reply, "I do it to save *time*." A very good object, no doubt: but what right have you to do it at your friend's expense? Isn't *his* time as valuable, as yours? Years ago, I used to receive letters from a friend—and very interesting letters too—written in one of the most atrocious hands ever invented. It generally took me about a week to read one of his letters. I used to carry it about in my pocket, and take it out at leisure times, to puzzle over the riddles which composed it—holding it in different positions, and at different distances, till at last the meaning of some hopeless scrawl would flash upon me, when I at once wrote down the English under it; and, when several had been thus guessed, the context would help with the others, till at last the

whole series of hieroglyphics was deciphered. If *all* one's friends wrote like that, Life would be entirely spent in reading their letters!

This Rule applies, specially, to names of people or places—and *most* specially to *foreign names*. I got a letter once, containing some Russian names, written in the same hasty scramble in which people often write "yours sincerely". The *context*, of course, didn't help in the least: and one spelling was just as likely as another, so far, as *I* knew: It was necessary to write and tell my friend that I couldn't read any of them!

My second Rule is, don't fill more than a page and a half with apologies for not having written sooner!

The best subject, to *begin* with, is your friend's last letter. Write with the letter open before you. Answer his questions and make any remarks his letter suggests. *Then* go on to what you want to say yourself. This arrangement is more courteous, and pleasanter for the reader, than to fill the letter with your own invaluable remarks, and then hastily answer your friend's questions in a postscript. Your friend is much more likely to enjoy your wit, *after* his own anxiety for information has been satisfied.

In referring to anything your friend has said in his letter, it is best to *quote the exact words*, and not to give a summary of them in *your* words. *A's* impression, of what *B* has said, expressed in *A's* words, will never convey to *B* the meaning of his own words.

This is specially necessary when some point has arisen as to which the two correspondents do not quite agree. There ought to be no opening for such writing as "You are quite mistaken in thinking I Said so-and-so. It was not in the least my meaning, &c., &c.", which tends to make a correspondence last for a life-time.

A few more Rules may fitly be given here, for correspondence that has unfortunately become *controversial*.

One is, *don't repeat yourself*. When once you have said your say, fully and clearly, on a certain point, and have failed to convince your friend, *drop that subject:*

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to repeat your arguments, all over again, will simply lead to his doing the same; and so you will go on, like a Circulating Decimal. *Did you ever know a Circulating Decimal come to an end?*

Another Rule is, when you have written a letter that you feel may possibly irritate your friend, however necessary you may have felt it to so express yourself, *put it aside till the next day*. Then read it over again, and fancy it addressed to yourself. This will often lead to your writing it all over again, taking out a lot of the vinegar and pepper, and putting in honey instead, and thus making a *much* more palatable dish of it! If, when you have done your best to write inoffensively, you still feel that will it will probably lead to further controversy, *keep a copy of it*. There is very little use, months afterwards, in pleading "I am almost sure I never expressed myself as you say: to the best of my recollection I said so-and-so". *Far* better to be able to write "I did not express myself so: these are the words I used".

My fifth Rule is, if your friend makes a severe remark, either leave it unnoticed, or make your reply distinctly *less* severe: and if he makes a friendly remark, tending towards "making up" the little difference that has arisen between you, let your reply be distinctly *more* friendly. If, in picking a quarrel, each party declined to go more than *three-eighths* of the way, and if, in making friends, each was ready to go *five-eighths* of the way—why, there would be more reconciliations than quarrels! Which is like-the Irishman's remonstrance to his gad-about daughter "Shure, you're *always* goin' out! You go out *three* times, for *wanst* that you come in!"

My sixth Rule (and my last remark about controversial correspondence) is, *don't try to have the last word!* How many a controversy would he nipped in the bud, if each was anxious to let the other have the last word! Never mind how telling a rejoinder you leave unuttered: never mind your friend's supposing that you are silent from lack of anything to say: let the thing drop, as soon as it is possible without discourtesy: remember "speech is silver, but silence is golden"! (N.B.—If you are a gentleman, and your friend a lady, this Rule is superfluous: *you wo'n't get the last word!*)

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My seventh Rule is, if it should ever occur to you to write, jestingly, in *dispraise* of your friend, be sure you exaggerate enough to make the jesting *obvious*: a word spoken in *jest*, but taken as earnest, may lead to very serious consequences. I have known it to lead to the breaking-off of a friendship. Suppose, for instance, you wish to remind your friend of a sovereign you have lent him, which he has forgotten to repay—you might quite *mean* the words "I mention it, as you seem to have a conveniently bad memory for debts", in jest; yet there would be nothing to wonder at if he took offence at that way of putting it. But, suppose you wrote "Long observation of your career, as a pickpocket and a burglar, has convinced me that my one lingering hope, for recovering that sovereign I lent you, is to say 'Pay up, or I'll summons yer!'" he would indeed be a matter-of-fact friend if he took *that* as seriously meant!

My eighth Rule. When you say, in your letter, "I enclose cheque for £5," or "I enclose John's letter for you to see", leave off writing for a moment—go and get the document referred to—and *put it into the envelope*. Otherwise, you are pretty certain to find it lying about, *after the Post has gone!*

My ninth Rule. When you get to the end of a note-sheet, and find you have more to say, take another piece of paper, a whole sheet, or a scrap, as the case may demand: but whatever you do, *don't cross!* Remember the old proverb "*Cross-writing makes cross reading*". "The old proverb?" you say, inquiringly. "*How* old?" Well, not so *very* ancient, I must confess. In fact, I'm afraid I invented it while writing this paragraph! Still, you know' "old" is, a *comparative* term. I think you would be quite justified in addressing a chicken, just out of the shell, as "Old boy!" *when compared* with another chicken, that was only half-out!

4. How to End a Letter.

If doubtful whether to end with "yours faithfully", or "yours truly", or "your

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most truly", &c. (there are at least a dozen varieties; before you reach "yours affectionately"), refer to your correspondent's last letter, and make your winding-up *at least as friendly as his*: in fact, even if a shade *more* friendly, it will do no harm!

A Postscript is a very useful invention: but it is *not* meant (as so many ladies suppose) to contain the real *gist* of the letter: it serves rather to throw into the shade any little matter we do *not* wish to make a fuss about. For example, your friend had promised to execute a commission for you in town, but forgot it, thereby putting you to great inconvenience: and he now writes to apologise for his negligence. It would be cruel, and needlessly crushing, to make it the main subject of your reply. How much more gracefully it comes in thus! "P.S. Don't distress yourself any more about having omitted that little matter in town. I wo'n't deny that it *did* put my plans out a little, at the time: but it's all right now. I often forget things, myself: and 'those, who live in glasshouses, mustn't throw stones', you know!"

When you take your letters to the Post, *carry them in your hand*. If you put them in your pocket you will take a long country-walk (I speak from experience), passing the Post-Office *twice*, going and returning, and, when you get home, will find them *still* in your pocket.

5. On Registering Correspondence.

Let me recommend you to keep a record of Letters Received and Sent. I have kept one for many years, and have found it of the greatest possible service, in many ways: it secures my *answering* Letters, however long they have to wait; it enables me to refer, for my own guidance, to the details of previous correspondence, though the actual Letters may have been destroyed long ago; and, most valuable feature of all, if any difficulty arises, years afterwards, in connection with a half-forgotten correspondence, it enables me to say, with confidence, "I did *not* tell you that he was 'an *invaluable* servant in every way', and that you *couldn't* 'trust him too much'. I

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have a *precis* of my letter. What I said was 'he is a *valuable* servant in *many* ways, but *don't* trust him too much'. So, if he's cheated you, you really must not hold me responsible for it!"

I will now give you a few simple Rules for making, and keeping a Letter-Resister.

Get a blank book, containing (say) 200 leaves, about 4 inches wide and 7 high. It should be *well* fastened into its cover, as it will have to be opened and shut hundreds of times. Have a line ruled, in red ink, down each margin of every page, an inch off the edge (the margin should be wide enough to contain a number of 5 digits, easily: *I* manage with a 3/4 inch margin: but, unless you write very small you will find an inch more comfortable).

Write a *precis* of each Letter, received or sent, in chronological order. Let the entry of a "received" Letter reach from the left-hand edge to the right-hand marginal line; and the entry of a "sent" Letter from the left-hand marginal line to the right-hand edge. Thus the two kinds will be quite distinct, and you can easily hunt through the "received" Letters by themselves, without being bothered with the "sent" Letters; and *vice versa*.

Use the *right-hand* pages only: and, when you come to -the end of the book, turn it upside-down, and begin at the other end, still using right-hand pages. You will find this much more comfortable than using left-hand pages.

You will find it convenient to write, at the top of every sheet of a "received" Letter, its Register-Number in full.

I will now give a few (ideal) specimen pages of my Letter-Register, and make a few remarks on them: after which I think you will find it easy enough to manage one for yourself.

27

29217	/90.	
(217) sendg, J., a	Ap. 1 (Tu.) *Jones, Mrs.* am as present from self and Mr. white elephant.	27518 225
(218) grand	do. *Wilkins & Co.* bill, for piano, £175 10s. 6*d*. [pd	28743 221, 2
(219) 'Grand to borr	do. *Scareham, H.* [writes from Hotel, Monte Carlo'] asking ow £50 for a few weeks (!)	⊙
⊙	(220) do. *Scareham, H.* would know *object*, for wh loan is and *security* offered.	like to asked,
218 246	(221) Ap. 3. *Wilkins & Co.* vious letter, now before me, undertook to supply one for decling to pay more.	in pre- you £120:
23514 218 228	(222) do. *Cheetham & Sharp.* written 221—enclosing previo ter—is law on my side?	have us let- [
(223) G.N. dresse 'very	Ap. 4. *Manager, Goods Statn,* *R.* White Elephant arrived, ad- d to you—send for it at once— savage'.	226

28

29225	/90.	
217 230	(225) Ap. 4. (F) *Jones, Mrs.* th but no room for it at present, am ing it to Zoological Gardens.	anks, send-
223	(226) do. *Manager, Goods Sta* *N.R.* please deliver, to bearer note, case containg White Ele- addressed to me.	*tn, G.* of this phant
223 229	(227) do. *Director Zool. Garde* closing above note to R.W. Ma call for valuable animal, prese Gardens.	*ns.* (en- nager) nted to
(228) misquo is £18	Ap. 8. *Cheetham & Sharp.* you te enclosed letter, limit named o.	222 237
(229) case de Port — quet —	Ap. 9. *Director, Zoo. Gardens.* livered to us contained 1 doz. consumed at Directors' Ban- many thanks.	227 230
225 ⊙	(230) do. T *Jones, Mrs.* why doz. of Port a 'White Elephant'?	call a
(231) joke'.	do. T *Jones, Mrs.* 'it was a	⊙

29

29233	/90.	
242	(233) Ap. 10. (Th) *Page & Co.* Macaulay's Essays and "Jane (cheap edtn).	orderg Eyre"
(234) 2 or 3	do. *Aunt Jemima*—invitg for days after the 15th. [	236
(235) recevd & Co.	do. *Lon. and West. Bk.* have £250, pd to yr Acct fm Parkins Calcutta [en	
234 239	(236) do. *Aunt Jemima*—can possibly come this month, will when able.	not write [
228 240	(237) Ap. 11. *Cheetham and* turn letter enclosed to you.	*Co.* re- [×
245	(238) do. *Morton, Philip.* Co lend me Browning's 'Dramati sonæ' for a day or 2?	uld you s Per-
(239) ing ho '136,	Ap. 14. *Aunt Jemima,* leav- use at end of month: address Royal Avenue, Bath.' [	236
(240) returng	Ap. 15. *Cheetham and Co.,* letter as reqd, bill 6/6/8. [	237 244

30

29242	/90.	
(242) for boo	Ap. 15. (Tu) *Page & Co.* bill ks, as ordered, 15/6 [	233
(243)	do. ¶ *do.* books	247
240 248	(244) do. *Cheetham and Co.* c derstand the 6/8—what is £6	an un- for?
(245) matis	Ap. 17. ¶ *Morton, P.* 'Dra- Personæ', as asked for. [retd	238 249
221 250	(246) do. *Wilkins and Co.* w bill, 175/10/6, and ch. for do.	ith [en
243	(247) do. *Page and Co.* bill, postal ♯107258 for 15/- and	15/6, 6 stps.
(248) was a	Ap. 18. *Cheetham and Co.* it 'clerical error' (!)	244
245	(249) Ap. 19. *Morton, P.* retu Browning with many thanks.	rng
(250) bill.	do. *Wilkins and Co.* receptd	246

I begin each page by putting, at the top left-hand corner, the next entry-number I am going to use, *in full* (the last 3 digits of each entry-number are enough afterwards); and I put the date of the year, at the top, in the centre.

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I begin each entry with the last 3 digits of the entry-number, enclosed in an oval (this is difficult to reproduce in print, so I have put round-parentheses here). Then, for the *first* entry in each page, I put the, day of the month and the day of the week: afterwards, "do." is enough for the month-day, till it changes: I do not repeat the week-day.

Next, if the entry is *not* a letter, I put a symbol, for "parcel" (see Nos. 243, 245) or "telegram" (see Nos. 230, 231) as the case may be.

Next, the name of the person, underlined (indicated here by italics).

If an entry needs special further attention, I put [at the end: and, when it has been attended to, I fill in the appropriate symbol, *e.g.*, in No. 218, it showed that the bill had to be *paid*; in No. 222, that an answer was really *needed* (the " x " means "attended to"); in No. 234, that I owed the old lady a visit; in No. 235, that the item had to be entered in my account book; in No. 236, that I must not forget to write; in No. 239, that the address had to be entered in my address-book; in No. 245; that the book had to be returned.

I give each entry the space of 2 lines, whether it fills them or not, in order to have room for references. And, at the foot of each page I leave 2 or 3 lines *blank* (often useful afterwards for entering omitted Letters) and miss one or 2 numbers before I begin the next page.

At any odd moments of leisure, I "make up" the entry-book, in various ways, as follows:

(1) I draw a *second* line, at the right-hand end of the "received" entries, and at the left-hand end of the "sent" entries. This I usually do pretty well "up to date". In my Register the first line is *red*, the second *blue*: here I distinguish them by making the first thin, and the second *thick*.

(2) Beginning with the last entry, and going backwards, I read over the names till I recognise one as having occurred already: I then link the two entries together, by giving the one, that comes first in chronological order, a "foot-reference" (see Nos. 217, 225). I do not keep this "up to date", but

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leave it till there are 4 or 5 pages to be done. I work back till I come among entries that are all supplied with "foot-references", when I once more glance through the last few pages; to see if there are any entries not yet supplied with head-references: *their* predecessors may need a special search. If an entry is connected, in subject, with another under a different name, I link them by cross-references, distinguished from the head- and foot-references by being written *further from the marginal line* (see No. 229). When 2 consecutive entries have the same name, and are both of the same kind (*i.e.* both "received" or both "sent") I bracket them (see Nos. 242, 243); if of different kinds, I link them with the symbol used for Nos. 219, 220.

(3) Beginning at the earliest entry not yet done with, and going forwards, I cross out every entry that has got a head- and foot-reference, and is done with, by continuing the extra line *through* it (se&Nos. 221, 223, 225). Thus, wherever a *break* occurs in this extra.line, it shows there is some matter still needing attention. I do not keep this anything like "up to date", but leave it till there are 3o or 4o pages to look through at a time. When the first page in the volume is thus completely crossed out, I put a mark at the foot of the page to indicate this; and so with pages 2, 3, &c. Hence, whenever I do this part of the "making-up", I need not begin at the beginning of the volume, but only at the *earliest page that has not got this mark*.

All this looks very complicated, when stated at full length: but you will find it perfectly simple, when you have had a little practice, and will come to regard the "making-up" as a pleasant occupation for a rainy day, or at any time that you feel disinclined for more severe mental work. In the Game of Whist, Hoyle gives us one golden Rule, "When in doubt, win the trick"—I find that Rule admirable for real life: when in doubt what to do, I "make-up" my Letter-Register!

1860a. Samuel **BUTLER**. (1835-1902) **Darwin among the Machines**. written 1863.	
(extract) ***Erewhon***, A Novel. written 1872.	
Chapter 23: **The Book of the Machines.** Chapter 24: **The Book of the Machines—Continued.** Chapter 25: **The Book of the Machines—Concluded.**	

Darwin Among the Machines.

[To the Editor of the *Press*, Christchurch, New Zealand, 13 June, 1863.]

Sir—

There are few things of which the present generation is more justly proud than of the wonderful improvements which are daily taking place in all sorts of mechanical appliances. And indeed it is matter for great congratulation on many grounds. It is unnecessary to mention these here, for they are sufficiently obvious; our present business lies with considerations which may somewhat tend to humble our pride and to make us think seriously of the future prospects of the human race. If we revert to the earliest primordial types of mechanical life, to the lever, the wedge, the inclined plane, the screw and the pulley, or (for analogy would lead us one step further) to that one primordial type from which all the mechanical kingdom has been developed, we mean to the lever itself, and if we then examine the machinery of the *Great Eastern*, we find ourselves almost awestruck at the vast development of the mechanical world, at the gigantic strides with which it has advanced in comparison with the slow progress of the animal and vegetable

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kingdom. We shall find it impossible to refrain from asking ourselves what the end of this mighty movement is to be. In what direction is it tending? What will be its upshot? To give a few imperfect hints towards a solution of these questions is the object of the present letter.

We have used the words "mechanical life," "the mechanical kingdom," "the mechanical world" and so forth, and we have done so advisedly, for as the vegetable kingdom was slowly developed from the mineral, and as in like manner the animal supervened upon the vegetable, so now in these last few ages an entirely new kingdom has sprung up, of which we as yet have only seen what will one day be considered the antediluvian prototypes of the race.

We regret deeply that our knowledge both of natural history and of machinery is too small to enable us to undertake the gigantic task of classifying machines into the genera and sub-genera, species, varieties and sub-varieties, and so forth, of tracing the connecting links between machines of widely different characters, of pointing out how subservience to the use of man has played that part among machines which natural selection has performed in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, of pointing out rudimentary organs * which exist in some few machines, feebly developed and perfectly useless, yet serving to mark descent from some ancestral type which has either perished or been modified into some new phase of mechanical existence. We can only point out this field for investigation; it must be followed by others whose education and talents have been of a much higher order than any which we can lay claim to.

Some few hints we have determined to venture upon, though we do so with the profoundest diffidence. Firstly, we would remark that as some of the lowest of the vertebrata attained a far greater size than has descended to their more highly organised living representatives, so a diminution in the size of machines has often attended their development and progress. Take the watch for instance. Examine the beautiful structure of the little animal, watch the intelligent play of the minute members which compose it; yet this little creature is but a development of the

cumbrous clocks of the thirteenth century— it is no deterioration from them. The day may come when clocks, which certainly at the present day are not diminishing in bulk, may be entirely superseded by the universal use of watches, in which case clocks will become extinct like the earlier saurians, while the watch (whose tendency has for some years been rather to decrease in size than the contrary) will remain the only existing type of an extinct race.

The views of machinery which we are thus feebly indicating will suggest the solution of one of the greatest and most mysterious questions of the day. We refer to the question: What sort of creature man's next successor in the supremacy of the earth is likely to be. We have often heard this debated; but it appears to us that we are ourselves creating our own successors; we are daily adding to the beauty and delicacy of their physical organisation; we are daily giving them greater power and supplying by all sorts of ingenious contrivances that self-regulating, self-acting power which will be to them what intellect has been to the human race. In the course of ages we shall find ourselves the inferior race. Inferior in power, inferior in that moral quality of self-control, we shall look up to them as the acme of all that the best and wisest man can ever dare to aim at. No evil passions, no jealousy, no avarice, no impure desires will disturb the serene might of those glorious creatures. Sin, shame, and sorrow will have no place among them. Their minds will be in a state of perpetual calm, the contentment of a spirit that knows no wants, is disturbed by no regrets. Ambition will never torture them. Ingratitude will never cause them the uneasiness of a moment. The guilty conscience, the hope deferred, the pains of exile, the insolence of office, and the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes — these will be entirely unknown to them. If they want "feeding" (by the use of which very word we betray our recognition of them as living organism) they will be attended by patient slaves whose business and interest it will be to see that they shall want for nothing. If they are out of order they will be promptly attended to by physicians who are thoroughly acquainted with their constitutions; if they die, for even these glorious animals will not be exempt from that necessary and universal

consummation, they will immediately enter into a new phase of existence, for what machine dies entirely in every part at one and the same instant?

We take it that when the state of things shall have arrived which we have been above attempting to describe, man will have become to the machine what the horse and the dog are to man. He will continue to exist, nay even to improve, and will be probably better off in his state of domestication under the beneficent rule of the machines than he is in his present wild state. We treat our horses, dogs, cattle, and sheep, on the whole, with great kindness; we give them whatever experience teaches us to be best for them, and there can be no doubt that our use of meat has added to the happiness of the lower animals far more than it has detracted from it; in like manner it is reasonable to suppose that the machines will treat us kindly, for their existence is as dependent upon ours as ours is upon the lower animals. They cannot kill us and eat us as we do sheep; they will not only require our services in the parturition of their young (which branch of their economy will remain always in our hands), but also in feeding them, in setting them right when they are sick, and burying their dead or working up their corpses into new machines. It is obvious that if all the animals in Great Britain save man alone were to die, and if at the same time all intercourse with foreign countries were by some sudden catastrophe to be rendered perfectly impossible, it is obvious that under such circumstances the loss of human life would be something fearful to contemplate—in like manner were mankind to cease, the machines would be as badly off or even worse. The fact is that our interests are inseparable from theirs, and theirs from ours. Each race is dependent upon the other for innumerable benefits, and, until the reproductive organs of the machines have been developed in a manner which we are hardly yet able to conceive, they are entirely dependent upon man for even the continuance of their species. It is true that these organs may be ultimately developed, inasmuch as man's interest lies in that direction; there is nothing which our infatuated race would desire more than to see a fertile union between two steam engines; it is true that machinery is even at this present time employed in begetting machinery, in

becoming the parent of machines often after its own kind, but the days of flirtation, courtship, and matrimony appear to be very remote, and indeed can hardly be realized by our feeble and imperfect imagination.

Day by day, however, the machines are gaining ground upon us; day by day we are becoming more subservient to them; more men are daily bound down as slaves to tend them, more men are daily devoting the energies of their whole lives to the development of mechanical life. The upshot is simply a question of time, but that the time will come when the machines will hold the real supremacy over the world and its inhabitants is what no person of a truly philosophic mind can for a moment question.

Our opinion is that war to the death should be instantly proclaimed against them. Every machine of every sort should be destroyed by the well-wisher of his species. Let there be no exceptions made, no quarter shown; let us at once go back to the primeval condition of the race. If it be urged that this is impossible under the present condition of human affairs, this at once proves that the mischief is already done, that our servitude has commenced in good earnest, that we have raised a race of beings whom it is beyond our power to destroy, and that we are not only enslaved but are absolutely acquiescent in our bondage.

For the present we shall leave this subject, which we present gratis to the members of the Philosophical Society. Should they consent to avail themselves of the vast field which we have pointed out, we shall endeavour to labour in it ourselves at some future and indefinite period.

I am, Sir, etc.,

Cellarius

[In his preface to the second edition, Butler wrote:

I regret that reviewers have in some cases been inclined to treat the chapters on Machines as an attempt to reduce Mr Darwin's theory to an absurdity. Nothing could be further from my intention, and few things would be more distasteful to me than any attempt to laugh at Mr Darwin....]

Erewhon.

The Colour Code used by George SANDULESCU:

RED: relevant !

faint PINK: indirectly relevant !

LAVANDER: meta level of the narrative !

BLUE: ?

Chapter XXIII. The Book of the Machines.

The writer commences:-

"There was a time, when the earth was to all appearance utterly destitute both of animal and vegetable life, and when according to the opinion of our best philosophers it was simply a hot round ball with a crust gradually cooling. Now if a human being had existed while the earth was in this state and had been allowed to see it as though it were some other world with which he had no concern, and if at the same time he were entirely ignorant of all physical science, would he not have pronounced it impossible that creatures possessed of anything like consciousness should be evolved from the seeming cinder which he was beholding? Would he not have denied that it contained any potentiality of consciousness? Yet in the course of time consciousness came. Is it not possible then that there may be even yet new channels dug out for consciousness, though we can detect no signs of them at present?

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"Again. Consciousness, in anything like the present acceptation of the term, having been once a new thing—a thing, as far as we can see, subsequent even to an individual centre of action and to a reproductive system (which we see existing in plants without apparent consciousness)—why may not there arise some new phase of mind which shall be as different from all present known phases, as the mind of animals is from that of vegetables?

"It would be absurd to attempt to define such a mental state (or whatever it may be called), inasmuch as it must be something so foreign to man that his experience can give him no help towards conceiving its nature; but surely when we reflect upon the manifold phases of life and consciousness which have been evolved already, it would be rash to say that no others can be developed, and that animal life is the end of all things. There was a time when fire was the end of all things: another when rocks and water were so."

The writer, after enlarging on the above for several pages, proceeded to inquire whether traces of the approach of such a new phase of life could be perceived at present; whether we could see any tenements preparing which might in a remote futurity be adapted for it; whether, in fact, the primordial cell of such a kind of life could be now detected upon earth. In the course of his work he answered this question in the affirmative and pointed to the higher machines.

"There is no security"—**to quote his own words**—"against the ultimate development of mechanical consciousness, in the fact of machines possessing little consciousness now. A mollusc has not much consciousness. Reflect upon the extraordinary advance which machines have made during the last few hundred years, and note how slowly the animal and vegetable kingdoms are advancing. The more highly organised machines are creatures not so much of yesterday, as of the last five minutes, so to speak, in comparison with past time. Assume for the sake of argument that conscious beings have existed for some twenty million years: see what strides machines have made in the last thousand! May not the world last twenty million years longer? If so, what will they not in the end become? Is it not safer to nip the mischief in the bud and to forbid them further progress?

"But who can say that the vapour engine has not a kind of consciousness? Where does consciousness begin, and where end? Who can draw the line? Who can draw any line? Is not everything interwoven with everything? Is not machinery linked with animal life in an infinite variety of ways? The shell of a hen's egg is made of a delicate white ware and is a machine as much as an egg-cup is: /the shell is a device for holding the egg, as much as the egg-cup for holding the shell /: both are phases of the same function; the hen makes the shell in her inside, but it is pure pottery. She makes her nest outside of herself for convenience' sake, but the nest is not more of a machine than the egg-shell is. A 'machine' is only a 'device.' „

Then returning to consciousness, and endeavouring to detect its earliest manifestations, the writer continued:–

"There is a kind of plant that eats organic food with its flowers: when a fly settles upon the blossom, the petals close upon it and hold it fast till the plant has absorbed the insect into its system; but they will close on nothing but what is good to eat; of a drop of rain or a piece of stick they will take no notice. Curious! that so unconscious a thing should have such a keen eye to its own interest. If this is unconsciousness, where is the use of consciousness?

"Shall we say that the plant does not know what it is doing merely because it has no eyes, or ears, or brains? If we say that it acts mechanically, and mechanically only, shall we not be forced to admit that sundry other and apparently very deliberate actions are also mechanical? If it seems to us that the plant kills and eats a fly mechanically, may it not seem to the plant that a man must kill and eat a sheep mechanically?

"But it may be said that the plant is void of reason, because the growth of a plant is an involuntary growth. Given earth, air, and due temperature, the plant must grow: it is like a clock, which being once wound up will go till it is stopped or run down: it is like the wind blowing on the sails of a ship—the ship must go when the wind blows it. But can a healthy boy help growing if he have good meat and

drink and clothing? can anything help going as long as it is wound up, or go on after it is run down? Is there not a winding up process everywhere?

"Even a potato[1] in a dark cellar has a certain low cunning about him which serves him in excellent stead. He knows perfectly well what he wants and how to get it. He sees the light coming from the cellar window and sends his shoots crawling straight thereto: they will crawl along the floor and up the wall and out at the cellar window; if there be a little earth anywhere on the journey he will find it and use it for his own ends. What deliberation he may exercise in the matter of his roots when he is planted in the earth is a thing unknown to us, but we can imagine him saying, 'I will have a tuber here and a tuber there, and I will suck whatsoever advantage I can from all my surroundings. This neighbour I will overshadow, and that I will undermine; and what I can do shall be the limit of what I will do. He that is stronger and better placed than I shall overcome me, and him that is weaker I will overcome.'

"The potato says these things by doing them, which is the best of languages. What is consciousness if this is not consciousness? We find it difficult to sympathise with the emotions of a potato; so we do with those of an oyster. Neither of these things makes a noise on being boiled or opened, and noise appeals to us more strongly than anything else, because we make so much about our own sufferings. Since, then, they do not annoy us by any expression of pain we call them emotionless; and so *qua* mankind they are; but mankind is not everybody.

If it be urged that the action of the potato is chemical and mechanical only, and that it is due to the chemical and mechanical effects of light and heat, the answer would seem to lie in an inquiry whether every sensation is not chemical and mechanical in its operation? whether those things which we deem most purely spiritual are anything but disturbances of equilibrium in an infinite series of levers, beginning with those that are too small for microscopic detection, and going up to the human arm and the appliances which it makes use of ? whether there be not a molecular action of thought, whence a dynamical theory of the passions shall be deducible ? Whether strictly speaking we should not ask what kind of levers a man

is made of rather than what is his temperament ? How are they balanced ? How much of such and such will it take to weigh them down so as to make him do so and so ?"

The writer went on to say that he anticipated a time when it would be possible, by examining a single hair with a powerful microscope, to know whether its owner could be insulted with impunity. He then became more and more obscure, so that I was obliged to give up all attempt at translation; neither did I follow the drift of his argument. On coming to the next part which I could construe, I found that he had changed his ground.

"Either," he proceeds, "a great deal of action that has been called purely mechanical and unconscious must be admitted to contain more elements of consciousness than has been allowed hitherto (and in this case germs of consciousness will be found in many actions of the higher machines)—Or (assuming the theory of evolution but at the same time denying the consciousness of vegetable and crystalline action) the race of man has descended from things which had no consciousness at all. In this case there is no *a priori* improbability in the descent of conscious (and more than conscious) machines from those which now exist, except that which is suggested by the apparent absence of anything like a reproductive system in the mechanical kingdom. This absence however is only apparent, as I shall presently show.

"Do not let me be misunderstood as living in fear of any actually existing machine; there is probably no known machine which is more than a prototype of future mechanical life. The present machines are to the future as the early Saurians to man. The largest of them will probably greatly diminish in size. Some of the lowest vertebrate attained a much greater bulk than has descended to their more highly organised living representatives, and in like manner a diminution in the size of machines has often attended their development and progress.

"Take the watch, for example; examine its beautiful structure; observe the intelligent play of the minute members which compose it: yet this little creature is

but a development of the cumbrous clocks that preceded it; it is no deterioration from them. A day may come when clocks, which certainly at the present time are not diminishing in bulk, will be superseded owing to the universal use of watches, in which case they will become as extinct as ichthyosauri, while the watch, whose tendency has for some years been to decrease in size rather than the contrary, will remain the only existing type of an extinct race.

"But returning to the argument, I would repeat that I fear none of the existing machines; what I fear is the extraordinary rapidity with which they are becoming something very different to what they are at present. No class of beings have in any time past made so rapid a movement forward. Should not that movement be jealously watched, and checked while we can still check it ?

And is it not necessary for this end to destroy the more advanced of the machines which are in use at present, though it is admitted that they are in themselves harmless?

"As yet the machines receive their impressions through the agency of man's senses: one travelling machine calls to another in a shrill accent of alarm and the other instantly retires; but it is through the ears of the driver that the voice of the one has acted upon the other. Had there been no driver, the callee would have been deaf to the caller. There was a time when it must have seemed highly improbable that machines should learn to make their wants known by sound, even through the ears of man; may we not conceive, then, that a day will come when those ears will be no longer needed, and the hearing will be done by the delicacy of the machine's own construction?—when its language shall have been developed from the cry of animals to a speech as intricate as our own?

"It is possible that by that time children will learn the differential calculus—as they learn now to speak—from their mothers and nurses, or that they may talk in the hypothetical language, and work rule of three sums, as soon as they are born; but this is not probable; we cannot calculate on any corresponding advance in man's

intellectual or physical powers which shall be a set-off against the far greater development which seems in store for the machines. Some people may say that man's moral influence will suffice to rule them; but I cannot think it will ever be safe to repose much trust in the moral sense of any machine.

"Again, might not the glory of the machines consist in their being without this same boasted gift of language ? 'Silence,' it has been said by one writer, 'is a virtue which renders us agreeable to our fellow-creatures.'"

[1] The root alluded to is not the potato of our own gardens, but a plant so near akin to it that I have ventured to translate it thus. Apropos of its intelligence, had the writer known Butler he would probably have said—
"He knows what's what, and that's as high,
As metaphysic wit can fly."

Chapter XXIV. The Book of the Machines—Continued.

"But other questions come upon us. What is a man's eye but a machine for the little creature that sits behind in his brain to look through? A dead eye is nearly as good as a living one for some time after the man is dead. It is not the eye that cannot see, but the restless one that cannot see through it. Is it man's eyes, or is it the big seeing-engine which has revealed to us the existence of worlds beyond worlds into infinity? What has made man familiar with the scenery of the moon, the spots on the sun, or the geography of the planets? He is at the mercy of the seeing-engine for these things, and is powerless unless he tack it on to his own identity, and make it part and parcel of himself. Or, again, is it the eye, or the little see-engine, which has shown us the existence of infinitely minute organisms which swarm unsuspected around us?

"And take man's vaunted power of calculation. Have we not engines which can do all manner of sums more quickly and correctly than we can? What prizeman in Hypothetics at any of our Colleges of Unreason can compare with some of these machines in their own line? In fact, wherever precision is required man flies to the machine at once, as far preferable to himself. Our sum-engines never drop a figure, nor our looms a stitch; the machine is brisk and active, when the man is weary; it is clear-headed and collected, when the man is stupid and dull; it needs no slumber, when man must sleep or drop; ever at its post, ever ready for work, its alacrity never flags, its patience never gives in; its might is stronger than combined hundreds, and swifter than the flight of birds; it can burrow beneath the earth, and walk upon the largest rivers and sink not. This is the green tree; what then shall be done in the dry?

"Who shall say that a man does see or hear? He is such a hive and swarm of parasites that it is doubtful whether his body is not more theirs than his, and whether he is anything but another kind of ant-heap after all. May not man himself become a sort of parasite upon the machines? An affectionate machine-tickling aphid?

"It is said by some that our blood is composed of infinite living agents which go up and down the highways and byways of our bodies as people in the streets of a city. When we look down from a high place upon crowded thoroughfares, is it possible not to think of corpuscles of blood travelling through veins and nourishing the heart of the town? No mention shall be made of sewers, nor of the hidden nerves which serve to communicate sensations from one part of the town's body to another; nor of the yawning jaws of the railway stations, whereby the circulation is carried directly into the heart,—which receive the venous lines, and disgorge the arterial, with an eternal pulse of people. And the sleep of the town, how life-like! with its change in the circulation."

Here the writer became again so hopelessly obscure that I was obliged to miss several pages. He resumed:-

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"It can be answered that even though machines should hear never so well and speak never so wisely, they will still always do the one or the other for our advantage, not their own; that man will be the ruling spirit and the machine the servant; that as soon as a machine fails to discharge the service which man expects from it, it is doomed to extinction; that the machines stand to man simply in the relation of lower animals, the vapour-engine itself being only a more economical kind of horse; so that instead of being likely to be developed into a higher kind of life than man's, they owe their very existence and progress to their power of ministering to human wants, and must therefore both now and ever be man's inferiors.

"This is all very well. But the servant glides by imperceptible approaches into the master; and we have come to such a pass that, even now, man must suffer terribly on ceasing to benefit the machines. If all machines were to be annihilated at one moment, so that not a knife nor lever nor rag of clothing nor anything whatsoever were left to man but his bare body alone that he was born with, and if all knowledge of mechanical laws were taken from him so that he could make no more machines, and all machine-made food destroyed so that the race of man should be left as it were naked upon a desert island, we should become extinct in six weeks. A few miserable individuals might linger, but even these in a year or two would become worse than monkeys. Man's very soul is due to the machines; it is a machine-made thing: he thinks as he thinks, and feels as he feels, through the work that machines have wrought upon him, and their existence is quite as much a *sine qua non* for his, as his for theirs. This fact precludes us from proposing the complete annihilation of machinery, but surely it indicates that we should destroy as many of them as we can possibly dispense with, lest they should tyrannise over us even more completely.

"True, from a low materialistic point of view, it would seem that those thrive best who use machinery wherever its use is possible with profit; but this is the art of the machines—they serve that they may rule. They bear no malice towards man for destroying a whole race of them provided he creates a better instead; on the

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contrary, they reward him liberally for having hastened their development. It is for neglecting them that he incurs their wrath, or for using inferior machines, or for not making sufficient exertions to invent new ones, or for destroying them without replacing them; yet these are the very things we ought to do, and do quickly; for though our rebellion against their infant power will cause infinite suffering, what will not things come to, if that rebellion is delayed?

"They have preyed upon man's grovelling preference for his material over his spiritual interests, and have betrayed him into supplying that element of struggle and warfare without which no race can advance. The lower animals progress because they struggle with one another; the weaker die, the stronger breed and transmit their strength. The machines being of themselves unable to struggle, have got man to do their struggling for them: as long as he fulfils this function duly, all goes well with him—at least he thinks so; but the moment he fails to do his best for the advancement of machinery by encouraging the good and destroying the bad, he is left behind in the race of competition; and this means that he will be made uncomfortable in a variety of ways, and perhaps die.

"So that even now the machines will only serve on condition of being served, and that too upon their own terms; the moment their terms are not complied with, they jib, and either smash both themselves and all whom they can reach, or turn churlish and refuse to work at all. How many men at this hour are living in a state of bondage to the machines? How many spend their whole lives, from the cradle to the grave, in tending them by night and day? Is it not plain that the machines are gaining ground upon us, when we reflect on the increasing number of those who are bound down to them as slaves, and of those who devote their whole souls to the advancement of the mechanical kingdom?

"The vapour-engine must be fed with food and consume it by fire even as man consumes it; it supports its combustion by air as man supports it; it has a pulse and circulation as man has. It may be granted that man's body is as yet the more versatile of the two, but then man's body is an older thing; give the vapour-engine

but half the time that man has had, give it also a continuance of our present infatuation, and what may it not ere long attain to?

“There are certain functions indeed of the vapour-engine which will probably remain unchanged for myriads of years—which in fact will perhaps survive when the use of vapour has been superseded: the piston and cylinder, the beam, the fly-wheel, and other parts of the machine will probably be permanent, just as we see that man and many of the lower animals share like modes of eating, drinking, and sleeping; thus they have hearts which beat as ours, veins and arteries, eyes, ears, and noses; they sigh even in their sleep, and weep and yawn; they are affected by their children; they feel pleasure and pain, hope, fear, anger, shame; they have memory and prescience; they know that if certain things happen to them they will die, and they fear death as much as we do; they communicate their thoughts to one another, and some of them deliberately act in concert. The comparison of similarities is endless: I only make it because some may say that since the vapour-engine is not likely to be improved in the main particulars, it is unlikely to be henceforward extensively modified at all. This is too good to be true: it will be modified and suited for an infinite variety of purposes, as much as man has been modified so as to exceed the brutes in skill.

“In the meantime the stoker is almost as much a cook for his engine as our own cooks for ourselves. Consider also the colliers and pitmen and coal merchants and coal trains, and the men who drive them, and the ships that carry coals—what an army of servants do the machines thus employ! Are there not probably more men engaged in tending machinery than in tending men? Do not machines eat as it were by mannery? Are we not ourselves creating our successors in the supremacy of the earth? daily adding to the beauty and delicacy of their organisation, daily giving them greater skill and supplying more and more of that self-regulating self-acting power which will be better than any intellect?

“What a new thing it is for a machine to feed at all! The plough, the spade, and the cart must eat through man’s stomach; the fuel that sets them going must

burn in the furnace of a man or of horses. Man must consume bread and meat or he cannot dig; the bread and meat are the fuel which drive the spade. If a plough be drawn by horses, the power is supplied by grass or beans or oats, which being burnt in the belly of the cattle give the power of working: without this fuel the work would cease, as an engine would stop if its furnaces were to go out.

"A man of science has demonstrated 'that no animal has the power of originating mechanical energy, but that all the work done in its life by any animal, and all the heat that has been emitted from it, and the heat which would be obtained by burning the combustible matter which has been lost from its body during life, and by burning its body after death, make up altogether an exact equivalent to the heat which would be obtained by burning as much food as it has used during its life, and an amount of fuel which would generate as much heat as its body if burned immediately after death.' I do not know how he has found this out, but he is a man of science—how then can it be objected against the future vitality of the machines that they are, in their present infancy, at the beck and call of beings who are themselves incapable of originating mechanical energy?

"The main point, however, to be observed as affording cause for alarm is, that whereas animals were formerly the only stomachs of the machines, there are now many which have stomachs of their own, and consume their food themselves. This is a great step towards their becoming, if not animate, yet something so near akin to it, as not to differ more widely from our own life than animals do from vegetables. And though man should remain, in some respects, the higher creature, is not this in accordance with the practice of nature, which allows superiority in some things to animals which have, on the whole, been long surpassed? Has she not allowed the ant and the bee to retain superiority over man in the organisation of their communities and social arrangements, the bird in traversing the air, the fish in swimming, the horse in strength and fleetness, and the dog in self-sacrifice?

"It is said by some with whom I have conversed upon this subject, that the machines can never be developed into animate or quasi-animate existences,

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inasmuch as they have no reproductive system, nor seem ever likely to possess one. If this be taken to mean that they cannot marry, and that we are never likely to see a fertile union between two vapour-engines with the young ones playing about the door of the shed, however greatly we might desire to do so, I will readily grant it. But the objection is not a very profound one. No one expects that all the features of the now existing organisations will be absolutely repeated in an entirely new class of life. The reproductive system of animals differs widely from that of plants, but both are reproductive systems. Has nature exhausted her phases of this power?

"Surely if a machine is able to reproduce another machine systematically, we may say that it has a reproductive system. What is a reproductive system, if it be not a system for reproduction? And how few of the machines are there which have not been produced systematically by other machines? But it is man that makes them do so. Yes; but is it not insects that make many of the plants reproductive, and would not whole families of plants die out if their fertilisation was not effected by a class of agents utterly foreign to themselves? Does any one say that the red clover has no reproductive system because the humble bee (and the humble bee only) must aid and abet it before it can reproduce? No one. The humble bee is a part of the reproductive system of the clover. Each one of ourselves has sprung from minute animalcules whose entity was entirely distinct from our own, and which acted after their kind with no thought or heed of what we might think about it. These little creatures are part of our own reproductive system; then why not we part of that of the machines?

"But the machines which reproduce machinery do not reproduce machines after their own kind. A thimble may be made by machinery, but it was not made by, neither will it ever make, a thimble. Here, again, if we turn to nature we shall find abundance of analogies which will teach us that a reproductive system may be in full force without the thing produced being of the same kind as that which produced it. Very few creatures reproduce after their own kind; they reproduce something which has the potentiality of becoming that which their parents were. Thus the

butterfly lays an egg, which egg can become a caterpillar, which caterpillar can become a chrysalis, which chrysalis can become a butterfly; and though I freely grant that the machines cannot be said to have more than the germ of a true reproductive system at present, have we not just seen that they have only recently obtained the germs of a mouth and stomach? And may not some stride be made in the direction of true reproduction which shall be as great as that which has been recently taken in the direction of true feeding?

"It is possible that the system when developed may be in many cases a vicarious thing. Certain classes of machines may be alone fertile, while the rest discharge other functions in the mechanical system, just as the great majority of ants and bees have nothing to do with the continuation of their species, but get food and store it, without thought of breeding. One cannot expect the parallel to be complete or nearly so; certainly not now, and probably never; but is there not enough analogy existing at the present moment, to make us feel seriously uneasy about the future, and to render it our duty to check the evil while we can still do so? Machines can within certain limits beget machines of any class, no matter how different to themselves. Every class of machines will probably have its special mechanical breeders, and all the higher ones will owe their existence to a large number of parents and not to two only.

"We are misled by considering any complicated machine as a single thing; in truth it is a city or society, each member of which was bred truly after its kind. We see a machine as a whole, we call it by a name and individualize it; we look at our own limbs, and know that the combination forms an individual which springs from a single centre of reproductive action; we therefore assume that there can be no reproductive action which does not arise from a single centre; but this assumption is unscientific, and the bare fact that no vapour-engine was ever made entirely by another, or two others, of its own kind, is not sufficient to warrant us in saying that vapour-engines have no reproductive system. The truth is that each part of every vapour-engine is bred by its own special breeders, whose function it is to breed that

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part, and that only, while the combination of the parts into a whole forms another department of the mechanical reproductive system, which is at present exceedingly complex and difficult to see in its entirety.

"Complex now, but how much simpler and more intelligibly organised may it not become in another hundred thousand years? or in twenty thousand? For man at present believes that his interest lies in that direction; he spends an incalculable amount of labour and time and thought in making machines breed always better and better; he has already succeeded in effecting much that at one time appeared impossible, and there seem no limits to the results of accumulated improvements if they are allowed to descend with modification from generation to generation. It must always be remembered that man's body is what it is through having been moulded into its present shape by the chances and changes of many millions of years, but that his organisation never advanced with anything like the rapidity with which that of the machines is advancing. This is the most alarming feature in the case, and I must be pardoned for insisting on it so frequently."

Chapter XXV. The Book of the Machines—Concluded.

Here followed a very long and untranslatable digression about the different races and families of the then existing machines. The writer attempted to support his theory by pointing out the similarities existing between many machines of a widely different character, which served to show descent from a common ancestor. He divided machines into their genera, subgenera, species, varieties, subvarieties, and so forth. He proved the existence of connecting links between machines that seemed to have very little in common, and showed that many more such links had existed, but had now perished. He pointed out tendencies to reversion, and the presence of rudimentary organs which existed in many machines feebly developed and perfectly

useless, yet serving to mark descent from an ancestor to whom the function was actually useful.

I left the translation of this part of the treatise, which, by the way, was far longer than all that I have given here, for a later opportunity. Unfortunately, I left Erewhon before I could return to the subject; and though I saved my translation and other papers at the hazard of my life, I was obliged to sacrifice the original work. It went to my heart to do so; but I thus gained ten minutes of invaluable time, without which both Arowhena and myself must have certainly perished.

I remember one incident which bears upon this part of the treatise. The gentleman who gave it to me had asked to see my tobacco-pipe; he examined it carefully, and when he came to the little protuberance at the bottom of the bowl he seemed much delighted, and exclaimed that it must be rudimentary. I asked him what he meant.

"Sir," he answered, "this organ is identical with the rim at the bottom of a cup; it is but another form of the same function. Its purpose must have been to keep the heat of the pipe from marking the table upon which it rested. You would find, if you were to look up the history of tobacco-pipes, that in early specimens this protuberance was of a different shape to what it is now. It will have been broad at the bottom, and flat, so that while the pipe was being smoked the bowl might rest upon the table without marking it. Use and disuse must have come into play and reduced the function to its present rudimentary condition. I should not be surprised, sir," he continued, "if, in the course of time, it were to become modified still farther, and to assume the form of an ornamental leaf or scroll, or even a butterfly, while, in some cases, it will become extinct."

On my return to England, I looked up the point, and found that my friend was right.

Returning, however, to the treatise, my translation recommences as follows:-

"May we not fancy that if, in the remotest geological period, some early form of vegetable life had been endowed with the power of reflecting upon the dawning

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life of animals which was coming into existence alongside of its own, it would have thought itself exceedingly acute if it had surmised that animals would one day become real vegetables? Yet would this be more mistaken than it would be on our part to imagine that because the life of machines is a very different one to our own, there is therefore no higher possible development of life than ours; or that because mechanical life is a very different thing from ours, therefore that it is not life at all?

"But I have heard it said, 'granted that this is so, and that the vapour-engine has a strength of its own, surely no one will say that it has a will of its own?' Alas! if we look more closely, we shall find that this does not make against the supposition that the vapour-engine is one of the germs of a new phase of life. What is there in this whole world, or in the worlds beyond it, which has a will of its own? The Unknown and Unknowable only!

"A man is the resultant and exponent of all the forces that have been brought to bear upon him, whether before his birth or afterwards. His action at any moment depends solely upon his constitution, and on the intensity and direction of the various agencies to which he is, and has been, subjected. Some of these will counteract each other; but as he is by nature, and as he has been acted on, and is now acted on from without, so will he do, as certainly and regularly as though he were a machine.

"We do not generally admit this, because we do not know the whole nature of any one, nor the whole of the forces that act upon him. We see but a part, and being thus unable to generalize human conduct, except very roughly, we deny that it is subject to any fixed laws at all, and ascribe much both of a man's character and actions to chance, or luck, or fortune; but these are only words whereby we escape the admission of our own ignorance; and a little reflection will teach us that the most daring flight of the imagination or the most subtle exercise of the reason is as much the thing that must arise, and the only thing that can by any possibility arise, at the moment of its arising, as the falling of a dead leaf when the wind shakes it from the tree.

"For the future depends upon the present, and the present (whose existence is only one of those minor compromises of which human life is full—for it lives only on sufferance of the past and future) depends upon the past, and the past is unalterable. The only reason why we cannot see the future as plainly as the past, is because we know too little of the actual past and actual present; these things are too great for us, otherwise the future, in its minutest details, would lie spread out before our eyes, and we should lose our sense of time present by reason of the clearness with which we should see the past and future; perhaps we should not be even able to distinguish time at all; but that is foreign. What we do know is, that the more the past and present are known, the more the future can be predicted; and that no one dreams of doubting the fixity of the future in cases where he is fully cognisant of both past and present, and has had experience of the consequences that followed from such a past and such a present on previous occasions. He perfectly well knows what will happen, and will stake his whole fortune thereon.

"And this is a great blessing; for it is the foundation on which morality and science are built. The assurance that the future is no arbitrary and changeable thing, but that like futures will invariably follow like presents, is the groundwork on which we lay all our plans—the faith on which we do every conscious action of our lives. If this were not so we should be without a guide; we should have no confidence in acting, and hence we should never act, for there would be no knowing that the results which will follow now will be the same as those which followed before.

"Who would plough or sow if he disbelieved in the fixity of the future? Who would throw water on a blazing house if the action of water upon fire were uncertain? Men will only do their utmost when they feel certain that the future will discover itself against them if their utmost has not been done. The feeling of such a certainty is a constituent part of the sum of the forces at work upon them, and will act most powerfully on the best and most moral men. Those who are most firmly persuaded that the future is immutably bound up with the present in which their work is lying, will best husband their present, and till it with the greatest care. The

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future must be a lottery to those who think that the same combinations can sometimes precede one set of results, and sometimes another. If their belief is sincere they will speculate instead of working: these ought to be the immoral men; the others have the strongest spur to exertion and morality, if their belief is a living one.

"The bearing of all this upon the machines is not immediately apparent, but will become so presently. In the meantime I must deal with friends who tell me that, though the future is fixed as regards inorganic matter, and in some respects with regard to man, yet that there are many ways in which it cannot be considered as fixed. Thus, they say that fire applied to dry shavings, and well fed with oxygen gas, will always produce a blaze, but that a coward brought into contact with a terrifying object will not always result in a man running away. Nevertheless, if there be two cowards perfectly similar in every respect, and if they be subjected in a perfectly similar way to two terrifying agents, which are themselves perfectly similar, there are few who will not expect a perfect similarity in the running away, even though a thousand years intervene between the original combination and its being repeated.

"The apparently greater regularity in the results of chemical than of human combinations arises from our inability to perceive the subtle differences in human combinations—combinations which are never identically repeated. Fire we know, and shavings we know, but no two men ever were or ever will be exactly alike; and the smallest difference may change the whole conditions of the problem. Our registry of results must be infinite before we could arrive at a full forecast of future combinations; the wonder is that there is as much certainty concerning human action as there is; and assuredly the older we grow the more certain we feel as to what such and such a kind of person will do in given circumstances; but this could never be the case unless human conduct were under the influence of laws, with the working of which we become more and more familiar through experience.

"If the above is sound, it follows that the regularity with which machinery acts is no proof of the absence of vitality, or at least of germs which may be developed into a new phase of life. At first sight it would indeed appear that a

vapour-engine cannot help going when set upon a line of rails with the steam up and the machinery in full play; whereas the man whose business it is to drive it can help doing so at any moment that he pleases; so that the first has no spontaneity, and is not possessed of any sort of free will, while the second has and is.

"This is true up to a certain point; the driver can stop the engine at any moment that he pleases, but he can only please to do so at certain points which have been fixed for him by others, or in the case of unexpected obstructions which force him to please to do so. His pleasure is not spontaneous; there is an unseen choir of influences around him, which make it impossible for him to act in any other way than one. It is known beforehand how much strength must be given to these influences, just as it is known beforehand how much coal and water are necessary for the vapour-engine itself; and curiously enough it will be found that the influences brought to bear upon the driver are of the same kind as those brought to bear upon the engine—that is to say, food and warmth. The driver is obedient to his masters, because he gets food and warmth from them, and if these are withheld or given in insufficient quantities he will cease to drive; in like manner the engine will cease to work if it is insufficiently fed. The only difference is, that the man is conscious about his wants, and the engine (beyond refusing to work) does not seem to be so; but this is temporary, and has been dealt with above.

"Accordingly, the requisite strength being given to the motives that are to drive the driver, there has never, or hardly ever, been an instance of a man stopping his engine through wantonness. But such a case might occur; yes, and it might occur that the engine should break down: but if the train is stopped from some trivial motive it will be found either that the strength of the necessary influences has been miscalculated, or that the man has been miscalculated, in the same way as an engine may break down from an unsuspected flaw; but even in such a case there will have been no spontaneity; the action will have had its true parental causes: spontaneity is only a term for man's ignorance of the gods.

"Is there, then, no spontaneity on the part of those who drive the driver?"

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Here followed an obscure argument upon this subject, which I have thought it best to omit. The writer resumes:–

"After all then it comes to this, that the difference between the life of a man and that of a machine is one rather of degree than of kind, though differences in kind are not wanting. An animal has more provision for emergency than a machine. The machine is less versatile; its range of action is narrow; its strength and accuracy in its own sphere are superhuman, but it shows badly in a dilemma; sometimes when its normal action is disturbed, it will lose its head, and go from bad to worse like a lunatic in a raging frenzy: but here, again, we are met by the same consideration as before, namely, that the machines are still in their infancy; they are mere skeletons without muscles and flesh.

"For how many emergencies is an oyster adapted? For as many as are likely to happen to it, and no more. So are the machines; and so is man himself. The list of casualties that daily occur to man through his want of adaptability is probably as great as that occurring to the machines; and every day gives them some greater provision for the unforeseen. Let any one examine the wonderful self-regulating and self-adjusting contrivances which are now incorporated with the vapour-engine, let him watch the way in which it supplies itself with oil; in which it indicates its wants to those who tend it; in which, by the governor, it regulates its application of its own strength; let him look at that store-house of inertia and momentum the fly-wheel, or at the buffers on a railway carriage; let him see how those improvements are being selected for perpetuity which contain provision against the emergencies that may arise to harass the machines, and then let him think of a hundred thousand years, and the accumulated progress which they will bring unless man can be awakened to a sense of his situation, and of the doom which he is preparing for himself. [1]

"The misery is that man has been blind so long already. In his reliance upon the use of steam he has been betrayed into increasing and multiplying. To withdraw steam power suddenly will not have the effect of reducing us to the state in which we were before its introduction; there will be a general break-up and time of anarchy

such as has never been known; it will be as though our population were suddenly doubled, with no additional means of feeding the increased number. The air we breathe is hardly more necessary for our animal life than the use of any machine, on the strength of which we have increased our numbers, is to our civilisation; it is the machines which act upon man and make him man, as much as man who has acted upon and made the machines; but we must choose between the alternative of undergoing much present suffering, or seeing ourselves gradually superseded by our own creatures, till we rank no higher in comparison with them, than the beasts of the field with ourselves.

"Herein lies our danger. For many seem inclined to acquiesce in so dishonourable a future. They say that although man should become to the machines what the horse and dog are to us, yet that he will continue to exist, and will probably be better off in a state of domestication under the beneficent rule of the machines than in his present wild condition. We treat our domestic animals with much kindness. We give them whatever we believe to be the best for them; and there can be no doubt that our use of meat has increased their happiness rather than detracted from it. In like manner there is reason to hope that the machines will use us kindly, for their existence will be in a great measure dependent upon ours; they will rule us with a rod of iron, but they will not eat us; they will not only require our services in the reproduction and education of their young, but also in waiting upon them as servants; in gathering food for them, and feeding them; in restoring them to health when they are sick; and in either burying their dead or working up their deceased members into new forms of mechanical existence.

"The very nature of the motive power which works the advancement of the machines precludes the possibility of man's life being rendered miserable as well as enslaved. Slaves are tolerably happy if they have good masters, and the revolution will not occur in our time, nor hardly in ten thousand years, or ten times that. Is it wise to be uneasy about a contingency which is so remote? Man is not a sentimental animal where his material interests are concerned, and though here and there some

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ardent soul may look upon himself and curse his fate that he was not born a vapour-engine, yet the mass of mankind will acquiesce in any arrangement which gives them better food and clothing at a cheaper rate, and will refrain from yielding to unreasonable jealousy merely because there are other destinies more glorious than their own.

"The power of custom is enormous, and so gradual will be the change, that man's sense of what is due to himself will be at no time rudely shocked; our bondage will steal upon us noiselessly and by imperceptible approaches; nor will there ever be such a clashing of desires between man and the machines as will lead to an encounter between them. Among themselves the machines will war eternally, but they will still require man as the being through whose agency the struggle will be principally conducted. In point of fact there is no occasion for anxiety about the future happiness of man so long as he continues to be in any way profitable to the machines; he may become the inferior race, but he will be infinitely better off than he is now. Is it not then both absurd and unreasonable to be envious of our benefactors? And should we not be guilty of consummate folly if we were to reject advantages which we cannot obtain otherwise, merely because they involve a greater gain to others than to ourselves?

"With those who can argue in this way I have nothing in common. I shrink with as much horror from believing that my race can ever be superseded or surpassed, as I should do from believing that even at the remotest period my ancestors were other than human beings. Could I believe that ten hundred thousand years ago a single one of my ancestors was another kind of being to myself, I should lose all self-respect, and take no further pleasure or interest in life. I have the same feeling with regard to my descendants, and believe it to be one that will be felt so generally that the country will resolve upon putting an immediate stop to all further mechanical progress, and upon destroying all improvements that have been made for the last three hundred years. I would not urge more than this. We may trust ourselves to deal with those that remain, and though I should prefer to have seen the

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destruction include another two hundred years, I am aware of the necessity for compromising, and would so far sacrifice my own individual convictions as to be content with three hundred. Less than this will be insufficient."

This was the conclusion of the attack which led to the destruction of machinery throughout Erewhon. There was only one serious attempt to answer it. Its author said that machines were to be regarded as a part of man's own physical nature, being really nothing but extra-corporeal limbs. Man, he said, was a machinate mammal. The lower animals keep all their limbs at home in their own bodies, but many of man's are loose, and lie about detached, now here and now there, in various parts of the world—some being kept always handy for contingent use, and others being occasionally hundreds of miles away. A machine is merely a supplementary limb; this is the be all and end all of machinery. We do not use our own limbs other than as machines; and a leg is only a much better wooden leg than any one can manufacture.

"Observe a man digging with a spade; his right fore-arm has become artificially lengthened, and his hand has become a joint. The handle of the spade is like the knob at the end of the humerus; the shaft is the additional bone, and the oblong iron plate is the new form of the hand which enables its possessor to disturb the earth in a way to which his original hand was unequal. Having thus modified himself, not as other animals are modified, by circumstances over which they have had not even the appearance of control, but having, as it were, taken forethought and added a cubit to his stature, civilisation began to dawn upon the race, the social good offices, the genial companionship of friends, the art of unreason, and all those habits of mind which most elevate man above the lower animals, in the course of time ensued.

"Thus civilisation and mechanical progress advanced hand in hand, each developing and being developed by the other, the earliest accidental use of the stick having set the ball rolling, and the prospect of advantage keeping it in motion. In fact, machines are to be regarded as the mode of development by which human

organism is now especially advancing, every past invention being an addition to the resources of the human body. Even community of limbs is thus rendered possible to those who have so much community of soul as to own money enough to pay a railway fare; for a train is only a seven-leagued foot that five hundred may own at once."

The one serious danger which this writer apprehended was that the machines would so equalize men's powers, and so lessen the severity of competition, that many persons of inferior physique would escape detection and transmit their inferiority to their descendants. He feared that the removal of the present pressure might cause a degeneracy of the human race, and indeed that the whole body might become purely rudimentary, the man himself being nothing but soul and mechanism, an intelligent but passionless principle of mechanical action.

"How greatly," he wrote, "do we not now live with our external limbs? We vary our physique with the seasons, with age, with advancing or decreasing wealth. If it is wet we are furnished with an organ commonly called an umbrella, and which is designed for the purpose of protecting our clothes or our skins from the injurious effects of rain. Man has now many extra-corporeal members, which are of more importance to him than a good deal of his hair, or at any rate than his whiskers. His memory goes in his pocket-book. He becomes more and more complex as he grows older; he will then be seen with see-engines, or perhaps with artificial teeth and hair: if he be a really well-developed specimen of his race, he will be furnished with a large box upon wheels, two horses, and a coachman."

It was this writer who originated the custom of classifying men by their horse-power, and who divided them into genera, species, varieties, and subvarieties, giving them names from the hypothetical language which expressed the number of limbs which they could command at any moment. He showed that men became more highly and delicately organised the more nearly they approached the summit

of opulence, and that none but millionaires possessed the full complement of limbs with which mankind could become incorporate.

"Those mighty organisms," he continued, "our leading bankers and merchants, speak to their congeners through the length and breadth of the land in a second of time; their rich and subtle souls can defy all material impediment, whereas the souls of the poor are clogged and hampered by matter, which sticks fast about them as treacle to the wings of a fly, or as one struggling in a quicksand: their dull ears must take days or weeks to hear what another would tell them from a distance, instead of hearing it in a second as is done by the more highly organised classes. Who shall deny that one who can tack on a special train to his identity, and go wheresoever he will whensoever he pleases, is more highly organised than he who, should he wish for the same power, might wish for the wings of a bird with an equal chance of getting them; and whose legs are his only means of locomotion? That old philosophic enemy, matter, the inherently and essentially evil, still hangs about the neck of the poor and strangles him: but to the rich, matter is immaterial; the elaborate organisation of his extra-corporeal system has freed his soul.

"This is the secret of the homage which we see rich men receive from those who are poorer than themselves: it would be a grave error to suppose that this deference proceeds from motives which we need be ashamed of: it is the natural respect which all living creatures pay to those whom they recognise as higher than themselves in the scale of animal life, and is analogous to the veneration which a dog feels for man. Among savage races it is deemed highly honourable to be the possessor of a gun, and throughout all known time there has been a feeling that those who are worth most are the worthiest."

And so he went on at considerable length, attempting to show what changes in the distribution of animal and vegetable life throughout the kingdom had been caused by this and that of man's inventions, and in what way each was connected with the moral and intellectual development of the human species: he even allotted to some the share which they had had in the creation and modification of man's

body, and that which they would hereafter have in its destruction; but the other writer was considered to have the best of it, and in the end succeeded in destroying all the inventions that had been discovered for the preceding 271 years, a period which was agreed upon by all parties after several years of wrangling as to whether a certain kind of mangle which was much in use among washerwomen should be saved or no. It was at last ruled to be dangerous, and was just excluded by the limit of 271 years. **Then came the reactionary civil wars which nearly ruined the country, but which it would be beyond my present scope to describe.**

[1] **Since my return to England, I have been told that those who are conversant about machines use many terms concerning them which show that their vitality is here recognised, and that a collection of expressions in use among those who attend on steam engines would be no less startling than instructive.** I am also informed, that almost all **machines have their own tricks and idiosyncrasies**; that **they know their drivers and keepers**; and that **they will play pranks upon a stranger**. It is my intention, on a future occasion, to bring together examples both of the expressions in common use among mechanicians, and of any extraordinary exhibitions of mechanical sagacity and eccentricity that I can meet with—not as believing in the Erewhonian Professor's theory, but from the interest of the subject.

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1864. Walter **PATER**. (1839-1894)

Essay on Style, insterted in full, as appended to the volume *Appreciations*. written 1889.

Since all progress of mind consists for the most part in differentiation, in the resolution of an obscure and complex object into its component aspects, it is surely the stupidest of losses to confuse things which right reason has put asunder, to lose the sense of achieved distinctions, the distinction between poetry and prose, for instance, or, to speak more exactly, between the laws and characteristic excellences of verse and prose composition. On the other hand, those who have dwelt most emphatically on the distinction between prose and verse, prose and poetry, may sometimes have been tempted to limit the proper functions of prose too narrowly; and this again is at least false economy, as being, in effect, the renunciation of a certain means or faculty, in a world where after all we must needs make the most of things. Critical efforts to limit art a priori, by anticipations regarding the natural incapacity of the material with which this or that artist works, as the sculptor with solid form, or the prose-writer with the ordinary language of men, are always liable to be discredited by the facts of artistic production; and while prose is actually found to be a coloured thing with Bacon, picturesque with Livy and Carlyle, musical with Cicero and Newman, mystical and intimate with Plato and Michelet and Sir Thomas Browne, exalted or florid, it may be, with Milton and Taylor, it will be useless to protest that it can be nothing at all, except something very tamely and narrowly confined to mainly practical ends—a kind of "good round-hand;" as useless as the protest that poetry might not touch prosaic subjects as with Wordsworth, or an abstruse matter as with Browning, or treat contemporary life nobly as with

Tennyson. In subordination to one essential beauty in all good literary style, in all literature as a fine art, as there are many beauties of poetry so the beauties of prose are many, and it is the business of criticism to estimate them as such; as it is good in the criticism of verse to look for those hard, logical, and quasi-prosaic excellences which that too has, or needs. To find in the poem, amid the flowers, the allusions, the mixed perspectives, of *Lycidas* for instance, the thought, the logical structure:—how wholesome! how delightful! as to identify in prose what we call the poetry, the imaginative power, not treating it as out of place and a kind of vagrant intruder, but by way of an estimate of its rights, that is, of its achieved powers, there.

Dryden, with the characteristic instinct of his age, loved to emphasise the distinction between poetry and prose, the protest against their confusion with each other, coming with somewhat diminished effect from one whose poetry was so prosaic. In truth, his sense of prosaic excellence affected his verse rather than his prose, which is not only fervid, richly figured, poetic, as we say, but vitiated, all unconsciously, by many a scanning line. Setting up correctness, that humble merit of prose, as the central literary excellence, he is really a less correct writer than he may seem, still with an imperfect mastery of the relative pronoun. It might have been foreseen that, in the rotations of mind, the province of poetry in prose would find its assertor; and, a century after Dryden, amid very different intellectual needs, and with the need therefore of great modifications in literary form, the range of the poetic force in literature was effectively enlarged by Wordsworth. The true distinction between prose and poetry he regarded as the almost technical or accidental one of the absence or presence of metrical beauty, or, say! metrical restraint; and for him the opposition came to be between verse and prose of course; but, as the essential dichotomy in this matter, between imaginative and unimaginative writing, parallel to De Quincey's distinction between "the literature of power and the literature of knowledge," in the former of which the composer gives us not fact, but his peculiar sense of fact, whether past or present.

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Dismissing then, under sanction of Wordsworth, that harsher opposition of poetry to prose, as savouring in fact of the arbitrary psychology of the last century, and with it the prejudice that there can be but one only beauty of prose style, I propose here to point out certain qualities of all literature as a fine art, which, if they apply to the literature of fact, apply still more to the literature of the imaginative sense of fact, while they apply indifferently to verse and prose, so far as either is really imaginative—certain conditions of true art in both alike, which conditions may also contain in them the secret of the proper discrimination and guardianship of the peculiar excellences of either.

The line between fact and something quite different from external fact is, indeed, hard to draw. In Pascal, for instance, in the persuasive writers generally, how difficult to define the point where, from time to time, argument which, if it is to be worth anything at all, must consist of facts or groups of facts, becomes a pleading—a theorem no longer, but essentially an appeal to the reader to catch the writer's spirit, to think with him, if one can or will—an expression no longer of fact but of his sense of it, his peculiar intuition of a world, prospective, or discerned below the faulty conditions of the present, in either case changed somewhat from the actual world. In science, on the other hand, in history so far as it conforms to scientific rule, we have a literary domain where the imagination may be thought to be always an intruder. And as, in all science, the functions of literature reduce themselves eventually to the transcribing of fact, so all the excellences of literary form in regard to science are reducible to various kinds of pains-taking; this good quality being involved in all "skilled work" whatever, in the drafting of an act of parliament, as in sewing. Yet here again, the writer's sense of fact, in history especially, and in all those complex subjects which do but lie on the borders of science, will still take the place of fact, in various degrees. Your historian, for instance, with absolutely truthful intention, amid the multitude of facts presented to him must needs select, and in selecting assert something of his own humour, something that comes not of the world without but of a vision within. So Gibbon

moulds his unwieldy material to a preconceived view. Livy, Tacitus, Michelet, moving full of poignant sensibility amid the records of the past, each, after his own sense, modifies—who can tell where and to what degree?—and becomes something else than a transcriber; each, as he thus modifies, passing into the domain of art proper. For just in proportion as the writer's aim, consciously or unconsciously, comes to be the transcribing, not of the world, not of mere fact, but of his sense of it, he becomes an artist, his work fine art; and good art (as I hope ultimately to show) in proportion to the truth of his presentment of that sense; as in those humbler or plainer functions of literature also, truth—truth to bare fact, there—is the essence of such artistic quality as they may have. Truth! there can be no merit, no craft at all, without that. And further, all beauty is in the long run only fineness of truth, or what we call expression, the finer accommodation of speech to that vision within.

—The transcript of his sense of fact rather than the fact, as being preferable, pleasanter, more beautiful to the writer himself. In literature, as in every other product of human skill, in the moulding of a bell or a platter for instance, wherever this sense asserts itself, wherever the producer so modifies his work as, over and above its primary use or intention, to make it pleasing (to himself, of course, in the first instance) there, "fine" as opposed to merely serviceable art, exists. Literary art, that is, like all art which is in any way imitative or reproductive of fact—form, or colour, or incident—is the representation of such fact as connected with soul, of a specific personality, in its preferences, its volition and power.

Such is the matter of imaginative or artistic literature—this transcript, not of mere fact, but of fact in its infinite variety, as modified by human preference in all its infinitely varied forms. It will be good literary art not because it is brilliant or sober, or rich, or impulsive, or severe, but just in proportion as its representation of that sense, that soul-fact, is true, verse being only one department of such literature, and imaginative prose, it may be thought, being the special art of the modern world. That imaginative prose should be the special and opportune art of the modern world results from two important facts about the latter: first, the chaotic variety and

complexity of its interests, making the intellectual issue, the really master currents of the present time incalculable—a condition of mind little susceptible of the restraint proper to verse form, so that the most characteristic verse of the nineteenth century has been lawless verse; and secondly, an all-pervading naturalism, a curiosity about everything whatever as it really is, involving a certain humility of attitude, cognate to what must, after all, be the less ambitious form of literature. And prose thus asserting itself as the special and privileged artistic faculty of the present day, will be, however critics may try to narrow its scope, as varied in its excellence as humanity itself reflecting on the facts of its latest experience—an instrument of many stops, meditative, observant, descriptive, eloquent, analytic, plaintive, fervid. Its beauties will be not exclusively "pedestrian": it will exert, in due measure, all the varied charms of poetry, down to the rhythm which, as in Cicero, or Michelet, or Newman, at their best, gives its musical value to every syllable.

The literary artist is of necessity a scholar, and in what he proposes to do will have in mind, first of all, the scholar and the scholarly conscience—the male conscience in this matter, as we must think it, under a system of education which still to so large an extent limits real scholarship to men. In his self-criticism, he supposes always that sort of reader who will go (full of eyes) warily, considerately, though without consideration for him, over the ground which the female conscience traverses so lightly, so amiably. For the material in which he works is no more a creation of his own than the sculptor's marble. Product of a myriad various minds and contending tongues, compact of obscure and minute association, a language has its own abundant and often recondite laws, in the habitual and summary recognition of which scholarship consists. A writer, full of a matter he is before all things anxious to express, may think of those laws, the limitations of vocabulary, structure, and the like, as a restriction, but if a real artist will find in them an opportunity. His punctilious observance of the proprieties of his medium will diffuse through all he writes a general air of sensibility, of refined usage. Exclusiones debitae—the exclusions, or rejections, which nature demands—we know how large a part these

play, according to Bacon, in the science of nature. In a somewhat changed sense, we might say that the art of the scholar is summed up in the observance of those rejections demanded by the nature of his medium, the material he must use. Alive to the value of an atmosphere in which every term finds its utmost degree of expression, and with all the jealousy of a lover of words, he will resist a constant tendency on the part of the majority of those who use them to efface the distinctions of language, the facility of writers often reinforcing in this respect the work of the vulgar. He will feel the obligation not of the laws only, but of those affinities, avoidances, those mere preferences, of his language, which through the associations of literary history have become a part of its nature, prescribing the rejection of many a neology, many a license, many a gipsy phrase which might present itself as actually expressive. His appeal, again, is to the scholar, who has great experience in literature, and will show no favour to short-cuts, or hackneyed illustration, or an affectation of learning designed for the unlearned. Hence a contention, a sense of self-restraint and renunciation, having for the susceptible reader the effect of a challenge for minute consideration; the attention of the writer, in every minutest detail, being a pledge that it is worth the reader's while to be attentive too, that the writer is dealing scrupulously with his instrument, and therefore, indirectly, with the reader himself also, that he has the science of the instrument he plays on, perhaps, after all, with a freedom which in such case will be the freedom of a master.

For meanwhile, braced only by those restraints, he is really vindicating his liberty in the making of a vocabulary, an entire system of composition, for himself, his own true manner; and when we speak of the manner of a true master we mean what is essential in his art. Pedantry being only the scholarship of le cuistre (we have no English equivalent) he is no pedant, and does but show his intelligence of the rules of language in his freedoms with it, addition or expansion, which like the spontaneities of manner in a well-bred person will still further illustrate good taste.—The right vocabulary! Translators have not invariably seen how all-important that is in the work of translation, driving for the most part at idiom or construction;

whereas, if the original be first-rate, one's first care should be with its elementary particles, Plato, for instance, being often reproducible by an exact following, with no variation in structure, of word after word, as the pencil follows a drawing under tracing-paper, so only each word or syllable be not of false colour, to change my illustration a little.

Well! that is because any writer worth translating at all has winnowed and searched through his vocabulary, is conscious of the words he would select in systematic reading of a dictionary, and still more of the words he would reject were the dictionary other than Johnson's; and doing this with his peculiar sense of the world ever in view, in search of an instrument for the adequate expression of that, he begets a vocabulary faithful to the colouring of his own spirit, and in the strictest sense original. That living authority which language needs lies, in truth, in its scholars, who recognising always that every language possesses a genius, a very fastidious genius, of its own, expand at once and purify its very elements, which must needs change along with the changing thoughts of living people. Ninety years ago, for instance, great mental force, certainly, was needed by Wordsworth, to break through the consecrated poetic associations of a century, and speak the language that was his, that was to become in a measure the language of the next generation. But he did it with the tact of a scholar also. English, for a quarter of a century past, has been assimilating the phraseology of pictorial art; for half a century, the phraseology of the great German metaphysical movement of eighty years ago; in part also the language of mystical theology: and none but pedants will regret a great consequent increase of its resources. For many years to come its enterprise may well lie in the naturalisation of the vocabulary of science, so only it be under the eye of a sensitive scholarship—in a liberal naturalisation of the ideas of science too, for after all the chief stimulus of good style is to possess a full, rich, complex matter to grapple with. The literary artist, therefore, will be well aware of physical science; science also attaining, in its turn, its true literary ideal. And then, as the scholar is nothing without the historic sense, he will be apt to restore not really obsolete or

really worn-out words, but the finer edge of words still in use: ascertain, communicate, discover—words like these it has been part of our "business" to misuse. And still, as language was made for man, he will be no authority for correctnesses which, limiting freedom of utterance, were yet but accidents in their origin; as if one vowed not to say "its," which ought to have been in Shakespeare; "his" "hers," for inanimate objects, being but a barbarous and really inexpressive survival. Yet we have known many things like this. Racy Saxon monosyllables, close to us as touch and sight, he will intermix readily with those long, savoursome, Latin words, rich in "second intention." In this late day certainly, no critical process can be conducted reasonably without eclecticism. Of such eclecticism we have a justifying example in one of the first poets of our time. How illustrative of monosyllabic effect, of sonorous Latin, of the phraseology of science, of metaphysic, of colloquialism even, are the writings of Tennyson; yet with what a fine, fastidious scholarship throughout!

A scholar writing for the scholarly, he will of course leave something to the willing intelligence of his reader. "To go preach to the first passer-by," says Montaigne, "to become tutor to the ignorance of the first I meet, is a thing I abhor;" a thing, in fact, naturally distressing to the scholar, who will therefore ever be shy of offering uncomplimentary assistance to the reader's wit. To really strenuous minds there is a pleasurable stimulus in the challenge for a continuous effort on their part, to be rewarded by securer and more intimate grasp of the author's sense. Self-restraint, a skilful economy of means, ascêsis, that too has a beauty of its own; and for the reader supposed there will be an aesthetic satisfaction in that frugal closeness of style which makes the most of a word, in the exaction from every sentence of a precise relief, in the just spacing out of word to thought, in the logically filled space connected always with the delightful sense of difficulty overcome.

Different classes of persons, at different times, make, of course, very various demands upon literature. Still, scholars, I suppose, and not only scholars, but all disinterested lovers of books, will always look to it, as to all other fine art, for a

refuge, a sort of cloistral refuge, from a certain vulgarity in the actual world. A perfect poem like *Lycidas*, a perfect fiction like Esmond, the perfect handling of a theory like Newman's Idea of a University, has for them something of the uses of a religious "retreat." Here, then, with a view to the central need of a select few, those "men of a finer thread" who have formed and maintain the literary ideal, everything, every component element, will have undergone exact trial, and, above all, there will be no uncharacteristic or tarnished or vulgar decoration, permissible ornament being for the most part structural, or necessary. As the painter in his picture, so the artist in his book, aims at the production by honourable artifice of a peculiar atmosphere. "The artist," says Schiller, "may be known rather by what he omits"; and in literature, too, the true artist may be best recognised by his tact of omission. For to the grave reader words too are grave; and the ornamental word, the figure, the accessory form or colour or reference, is rarely content to die to thought precisely at the right moment, but will inevitably linger awhile, stirring a long "brain-wave" behind it of perhaps quite alien associations.

Just there, it may be, is the detrimental tendency of the sort of scholarly attentiveness of mind I am recommending. But the true artist allows for it. He will remember that, as the very word ornament indicates what is in itself non-essential, so the "one beauty" of all literary style is of its very essence, and independent, in prose and verse alike, of all removable decoration; that it may exist in its fullest lustre, as in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, for instance, or in Stendhal's *Le Rouge et Le Noir*, in a composition utterly unadorned, with hardly a single suggestion of visibly beautiful things. Parallel, allusion, the allusive way generally, the flowers in the garden:—he knows the narcotic force of these upon the negligent intelligence to which any diversion, literally, is welcome, any vagrant intruder, because one can go wandering away with it from the immediate subject. Jealous, if he have a really quickening motive within, of all that does not hold directly to that, of the facile, the otiose, he will never depart from the strictly pedestrian process, unless he gains a ponderable something thereby. Even assured of its congruity, he will still question

its serviceableness. Is it worth while, can we afford, to attend to just that, to just that figure or literary reference, just then?—Surplusage! he will dread that, as the runner on his muscles. For in truth all art does but consist in the removal of surplusage, from the last finish of the gem-engraver blowing away the last particle of invisible dust, back to the earliest divination of the finished work to be, lying somewhere, according to Michelangelo's fancy, in the rough-hewn block of stone.

And what applies to figure or flower must be understood of all other accidental or removable ornaments of writing whatever; and not of specific ornament only, but of all that latent colour and imagery which language as such carries in it. A lover of words for their own sake, to whom nothing about them is unimportant, a minute and constant observer of their physiognomy, he will be on the alert not only for obviously mixed metaphors of course, but for the metaphor that is mixed in all our speech, though a rapid use may involve no cognition of it. Currently recognising the incident, the colour, the physical elements or particles in words like absorb, consider, extract, to take the first that occur, he will avail himself of them, as further adding to the resources of expression. The elementary particles of language will be realized as colour and light and shade through his scholarly living in the full sense of them. Still opposing the constant degradation of language by those who use it carelessly, he will not treat coloured glass as if it were clear; and while half the world is using figure unconsciously, will be fully aware not only of all that latent figurative texture in speech, but of the vague, lazy, half-formed personification—a rhetoric, depressing, and worse than nothing, because it has no really rhetorical motive—which plays so large a part there, and, as in the case of more ostentatious ornament, scrupulously exact of it, from syllable to syllable, its precise value.

So far I have been speaking of certain conditions of the literary art arising out of the medium or material in or upon which it works, the essential qualities of language and its aptitudes for contingent ornamentation, matters which define scholarship as science and good taste respectively. They are both subservient to a more intimate quality of good style: more intimate, as coming nearer to the artist

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himself. The otiose, the facile, surplusage: why are these abhorrent to the true literary artist, except because, in literary as in all other art, structure is all-important, felt, or painfully missed, everywhere?—that architectural conception of work, which foresees the end in the beginning and never loses sight of it, and in every part is conscious of all the rest, till the last sentence does but, with undiminished vigour, unfold and justify the first—a condition of literary art, which, in contradistinction to another quality of the artist himself, to be spoken of later, I shall call the necessity of mind in style.

An acute philosophical writer, the late Dean Mansel (a writer whose works illustrate the literary beauty there may be in closeness, and with obvious repression or economy of a fine rhetorical gift) wrote a book, of fascinating precision in a very obscure subject, to show that all the technical laws of logic are but means of securing, in each and all of its apprehensions, the unity, the strict identity with itself, of the apprehending mind. All the laws of good writing aim at a similar unity or identity of the mind in all the processes by which the word is associated to its import. The term is right, and has its essential beauty, when it becomes, in a manner, what it signifies, as with the names of simple sensations. To give the phrase, the sentence, the structural member, the entire composition, song, or essay, a similar unity with its subject and with itself:—style is in the right way when it tends towards that. All depends upon the original unity, the vital wholeness and identity, of the initiatory apprehension or view. So much is true of all art, which therefore requires always its logic, its comprehensive reason—insight, foresight, retrospect, in simultaneous action—true, most of all, of the literary art, as being of all the arts most closely cognate to the abstract intelligence. Such logical coherency may be evidenced not merely in the lines of composition as a whole, but in the choice of a single word, while it by no means interferes with, but may even prescribe, much variety, in the building of the sentence for instance, or in the manner, argumentative, descriptive, discursive, of this or that part or member of the entire design. The blithe, crisp sentence, decisive as a child's expression of its needs, may alternate with the long-

contending, victoriously intricate sentence; the sentence, born with the integrity of a single word, relieving the sort of sentence in which, if you look closely, you can see much contrivance, much adjustment, to bring a highly qualified matter into compass at one view. For the literary architecture, if it is to be rich and expressive, involves not only foresight of the end in the beginning, but also development or growth of design, in the process of execution, with many irregularities, surprises, and afterthoughts; the contingent as well as the necessary being subsumed under the unity of the whole. As truly, to the lack of such architectural design, of a single, almost visual, image, vigorously informing an entire, perhaps very intricate, composition, which shall be austere, ornate, argumentative, fanciful, yet true from first to last to that vision within, may be attributed those weaknesses of conscious or unconscious repetition of word, phrase, motive, or member of the whole matter, indicating, as Flaubert was aware, an original structure in thought not organically complete. With such foresight, the actual conclusion will most often get itself written out of hand, before, in the more obvious sense, the work is finished. With some strong and leading sense of the world, the tight hold of which secures true composition and not mere loose accretion, the literary artist, I suppose, goes on considerately, setting joint to joint, sustained by yet restraining the productive ardour, retracing the negligences of his first sketch, repeating his steps only that he may give the reader a sense of secure and restful progress, readjusting mere assonances even, that they may soothe the reader, or at least not interrupt him on his way; and then, somewhere before the end comes, is burdened, inspired, with his conclusion, and betimes delivered of it, leaving off, not in weariness and because he finds himself at an end, but in all the freshness of volition. His work now structurally complete, with all the accumulating effect of secondary shades of meaning, he finishes the whole up to the just proportion of that ante-penultimate conclusion, and all becomes expressive. The house he has built is rather a body he has informed. And so it happens, to its greater credit, that the better interest even of a narrative to be recounted, a story to be told, will often be in its second reading. And though there

are instances of great writers who have been no artists, an unconscious tact sometimes directing work in which we may detect, very pleasurably, many of the effects of conscious art, yet one of the greatest pleasures of really good prose literature is in the critical tracing out of that conscious artistic structure, and the pervading sense of it as we read. Yet of poetic literature too; for, in truth, the kind of constructive intelligence here supposed is one of the forms of the imagination.

That is the special function of mind, in style. Mind and soul:—hard to ascertain philosophically, the distinction is real enough practically, for they often interfere, are sometimes in conflict, with each other. Blake, in the last century, is an instance of preponderating soul, embarrassed, at a loss, in an era of preponderating mind. As a quality of style, at all events, soul is a fact, in certain writers—the way they have of absorbing language, of attracting it into the peculiar spirit they are of, with a subtlety which makes the actual result seem like some inexplicable inspiration. By mind, the literary artist reaches us, through static and objective indications of design in his work, legible to all. By soul, he reaches us, somewhat capriciously perhaps, one and not another, through vagrant sympathy and a kind of immediate contact. Mind we cannot choose but approve where we recognise it; soul may repel us, not because we misunderstand it. The way in which theological interests sometimes avail themselves of language is perhaps the best illustration of the force I mean to indicate generally in literature, by the word soul. Ardent religious persuasion may exist, may make its way, without finding any equivalent heat in language: or, again, it may enkindle words to various degrees, and when it really takes hold of them doubles its force. Religious history presents many remarkable instances in which, through no mere phrase-worship, an unconscious literary tact has, for the sensitive, laid open a privileged pathway from one to another. "The altar-fire," people say, "has touched those lips!" The Vulgate, the English Bible, the English Prayer-Book, the writings of Swedenborg, the Tracts for the Times:—there, we have instances of widely different and largely diffused phases of religious feeling in operation as soul in style. But something of the same kind acts with similar power in certain writers of quite other

than theological literature, on behalf of some wholly personal and peculiar sense of theirs. Most easily illustrated by theological literature, this quality lends to profane writers a kind of religious influence. At their best, these writers become, as we say sometimes, "prophets"; such character depending on the effect not merely of their matter, but of their matter as allied to, in "electric affinity" with, peculiar form, and working in all cases by an immediate sympathetic contact, on which account it is that it may be called soul, as opposed to mind, in style. And this too is a faculty of choosing and rejecting what is congruous or otherwise, with a drift towards unity—unity of atmosphere here, as there of design—soul securing colour (or perfume, might we say?) as mind secures form, the latter being essentially finite, the former vague or infinite, as the influence of a living person is practically infinite. There are some to whom nothing has any real interest, or real meaning, except as operative in a given person; and it is they who best appreciate the quality of soul in literary art. They seem to know a person, in a book, and make way by intuition: yet, although they thus enjoy the completeness of a personal information, it is still a characteristic of soul, in this sense of the word, that it does but suggest what can never be uttered, not as being different from, or more obscure than, what actually gets said, but as containing that plenary substance of which there is only one phase or facet in what is there expressed.

If all high things have their martyrs, Gustave Flaubert might perhaps rank as the martyr of literary style. In his printed correspondence, a curious series of letters, written in his twenty-fifth year, records what seems to have been his one other passion—a series of letters which, with its fine casuistries, its firmly repressed anguish, its tone of harmonious grey, and the sense of disillusion in which the whole matter ends, might have been, a few slight changes supposed, one of his own fictions. Writing to Madame X. certainly he does display, by "taking thought" mainly, by constant and delicate pondering, as in his love for literature, a heart really moved, but still more, and as the pledge of that emotion, a loyalty to his work. Madame X., too, is a literary artist, and the best gifts he can send her are precepts of

perfection in art, counsels for the effectual pursuit of that better love. In his love-letters it is the pains and pleasures of art he insists on, its solaces: he communicates secrets, reproves, encourages, with a view to that. Whether the lady was dissatisfied with such divided or indirect service, the reader is not enabled to see; but sees that, on Flaubert's part at least, a living person could be no rival of what was, from first to last, his leading passion, a somewhat solitary and exclusive one.

I must scold you (he writes) for one thing, which shocks, scandalizes me, the small concern, namely, you show for art just now. As regards glory be it so: there, I approve. But for art!—the one thing in life that is good and real—can you compare with it an earthly love?—prefer the adoration of a relative beauty to the cultus of the true beauty? Well! I tell you the truth. That is the one thing good in me: the one thing I have, to me estimable. For yourself, you blend with the beautiful a heap of alien things, the useful, the agreeable, what not?—

The only way not to be unhappy is to shut yourself up in art, and count everything else as nothing. Pride takes the place of all beside when it is established on a large basis. Work! God wills it. That, it seems to me, is clear.—

I am reading over again the Aeneid, certain verses of which I repeat to myself to satiety. There are phrases there which stay in one's head, by which I find myself beset, as with those musical airs which are for ever returning, and cause you pain, you love them so much. I observe that I no longer laugh much, and am no longer depressed. I am ripe. You talk of my serenity, and envy me. It may well surprise you. Sick, irritated, the prey a thousand times a day of cruel pain, I continue my labour like a true working-man, who, with sleeves turned up, in the sweat of his brow, beats away at his anvil, never troubling himself whether it rains or blows, for hail or thunder. I was not like that formerly. The change has taken place naturally, though my will has counted for something in the matter.—

Those who write in good style are sometimes accused of a neglect of ideas, and of the moral end, as if the end of the physician were something else than healing, of the painter than painting-as if the end of art were not, before all else, the beautiful.

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What, then, did Flaubert understand by beauty, in the art he pursued with so much fervour, with so much self-command? Let us hear a sympathetic commentator:—

Possessed of an absolute belief that there exists but one way of expressing one thing, one word to call it by, one adjective to qualify, one verb to animate it, he gave himself to superhuman labour for the discovery, in every phrase, of that word, that verb, that epithet. In this way, he believed in some mysterious harmony of expression, and when a true word seemed to him to lack euphony still went on seeking another, with invincible patience, certain that he had not yet got hold of the unique word.... A thousand preoccupations would beset him at the same moment, always with this desperate certitude fixed in his spirit: Among all the expressions in the world, all forms and turns of expression, there is but one—one form, one mode—to express what I want to say.

The one word for the one thing, the one thought, amid the multitude of words, terms, that might just do: the problem of style was there!—the unique word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, essay, or song, absolutely proper to the single mental presentation or vision within.

In that perfect justice, over and above the many contingent and removable beauties with which beautiful style may charm us, but which it can exist without, independent of them yet dexterously availing itself of them, omnipresent in good work, in function at every point, from single epithets to the rhythm of a whole book, lay the specific, indispensable, very intellectual, beauty of literature, the possibility of which constitutes it a fine art.

One seems to detect the influence of a philosophic idea there, the idea of a natural economy, of some pre-existent adaptation, between a relative, somewhere in the world of thought, and its correlative, somewhere in the world of language—both alike, rather, somewhere in the mind of the artist, desiderative, expectant, inventive—meeting each other with the readiness of "soul and body reunited," in

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Blake's rapturous design; and, in fact, Flaubert was fond of giving his theory philosophical expression.—

There are no beautiful thoughts (he would say) without beautiful forms, and conversely. As it is impossible to extract from a physical body the qualities which really constitute it—colour, extension, and the like—without reducing it to a hollow abstraction, in a word, without destroying it; just so it is impossible to detach the form from the idea, for the idea only exists by virtue of the form.

All, the recognised flowers, the removable ornaments of literature (including harmony and ease in reading aloud, very carefully considered by him) counted, certainly; for these too are part of the actual value of what one says. But still, after all, with Flaubert, the search, the unwearied research, was not for the smooth, or winsome, or forcible word, as such, as with false Ciceronians, but quite simply and honestly, for the word's adjustment to its meaning. The first condition of this must be, of course, to know yourself, to have ascertained your own sense exactly. Then, if we suppose an artist, he says to the reader,—I want you to see precisely what I see. Into the mind sensitive to "form," a flood of random sounds, colours, incidents, is ever penetrating from the world without, to become, by sympathetic selection, a part of its very structure, and, in turn, the visible vesture and expression of that other world it sees so steadily within, nay, already with a partial conformity thereto, to be refined, enlarged, corrected, at a hundred points; and it is just there, just at those doubtful points that the function of style, as tact or taste, intervenes. The unique term will come more quickly to one than another, at one time than another, according also to the kind of matter in question. Quickness and slowness, ease and closeness alike, have nothing to do with the artistic character of the true word found at last. As there is a charm of ease, so there is also a special charm in the signs of discovery, of effort and contention towards a due end, as so often with Flaubert himself—in the style which has been pliant, as only obstinate, durable metal can be, to the inherent perplexities and recusancy of a certain difficult thought.

If Flaubert had not told us, perhaps we should never have guessed how tardy and painful his own procedure really was, and after reading his confession may think that his almost endless hesitation had much to do with diseased nerves. Often, perhaps, the felicity supposed will be the product of a happier, a more exuberant nature than Flaubert's. Aggravated, certainly, by a morbid physical condition, that anxiety in "seeking the phrase," which gathered all the other small ennuis of a really quiet existence into a kind of battle, was connected with his lifelong contention against facile poetry, facile art—art, facile and flimsy; and what constitutes the true artist is not the slowness or quickness of the process, but the absolute success of the result. As with those labourers in the parable, the prize is independent of the mere length of the actual day's work. "You talk," he writes, odd, trying lover, to Madame X.—

"You talk of the exclusiveness of my literary tastes. That might have enabled you to divine what kind of a person I am in the matter of love. I grow so hard to please as a literary artist, that I am driven to despair. I shall end by not writing another line."

"Happy," he cries, in a moment of discouragement at that patient labour, which for him, certainly, was the condition of a great success—

Happy those who have no doubts of themselves! who lengthen out, as the pen runs on, all that flows forth from their brains. As for me, I hesitate, I disappoint myself, turn round upon myself in despite: my taste is augmented in proportion as my natural vigour decreases, and I afflict my soul over some dubious word out of all proportion to the pleasure I get from a whole page of good writing. One would have to live two centuries to attain a true idea of any matter whatever. What Buffon said is a big blasphemy: genius is not long-continued patience. Still, there is some truth in the statement, and more than people think, especially as regards our own day. Art! art! art! bitter deception! phantom that glows with light, only to lead one on to destruction...

Again—

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I am growing so peevish about my writing. I am like a man whose ear is true but who plays falsely on the violin: his fingers refuse to reproduce precisely those sounds of which he has the inward sense. Then the tears come rolling down from the poor scraper's eyes and the bow falls from his hand.

Coming slowly or quickly, when it comes, as it came with so much labour of mind, but also with so much lustre, to Gustave Flaubert, this discovery of the word will be, like all artistic success and felicity, incapable of strict analysis: effect of an intuitive condition of mind, it must be recognised by like intuition on the part of the reader, and a sort of immediate sense. In every one of those masterly sentences of Flaubert there was, below all mere contrivance, shaping and afterthought, by some happy instantaneous concourse of the various faculties of the mind with each other, the exact apprehension of what was needed to carry the meaning. And that it fits with absolute justice will be a judgment of immediate sense in the appreciative reader. We all feel this in what may be called inspired translation. Well! all language involves translation from inward to outward. In literature, as in all forms of art, there are the absolute and the merely relative or accessory beauties; and precisely in that exact proportion of the term to its purpose is the absolute beauty of style, prose or verse. All the good qualities, the beauties, of verse also, are such, only as precise expression.

In the highest as in the lowliest literature, then, the one indispensable beauty is, after all, truth:—truth to bare fact in the latter, as to some personal sense of fact, diverted somewhat from men's ordinary sense of it, in the former; truth there as accuracy, truth here as expression, that finest and most intimate form of truth, the vraie vérité. And what an eclectic principle this really is! employing for its one sole purpose—that absolute accordance of expression to idea—all other literary beauties and excellences whatever: how many kinds of style it covers, explains, justifies, and at the same time safeguards! Scott's facility, Flaubert's deeply pondered evocation of "the phrase," are equally good art. Say what you have to say, what you have a will to say, in the simplest, the most direct and exact manner possible, with no

surplusage:—there, is the justification of the sentence so fortunately born, "entire, smooth, and round," that it needs no punctuation, and also (that is the point!) of the most elaborate period, if it be right in its elaboration. Here is the office of ornament: here also the purpose of restraint in ornament. As the exponent of truth, that austerity (the beauty, the function, of which in literature Flaubert understood so well) becomes not the correctness or purism of the mere scholar, but a security against the otiose, a jealous exclusion of what does not really tell towards the pursuit of relief, of life and vigour in the portraiture of one's sense. License again, the making free with rule, if it be indeed, as people fancy, a habit of genius, flinging aside or transforming all that opposes the liberty of beautiful production, will be but faith to one's own meaning. The seeming baldness of *Le Rouge et Le Noir* is nothing in itself; the wild ornament of *Les Misérables* is nothing in itself; and the restraint of Flaubert, amid a real natural opulence, only redoubled beauty—the phrase so large and so precise at the same time, hard as bronze, in service to the more perfect adaptation of words to their matter. Afterthoughts, retouchings, finish, will be of profit only so far as they too really serve to bring out the original, initiative, generative, sense in them.

In this way, according to the well-known saying, "The style is the man," complex or simple, in his individuality, his plenary sense of what he really has to say, his sense of the world; all cautions regarding style arising out of so many natural scruples as to the medium through which alone he can expose that inward sense of things, the purity of this medium, its laws or tricks of refraction: nothing is to be left there which might give conveyance to any matter save that. Style in all its varieties, reserved or opulent, terse, abundant, musical, stimulant, academic, so long as each is really characteristic or expressive, finds thus its justification, the sumptuous good taste of Cicero being as truly the man himself, and not another, justified, yet insured inalienably to him, thereby, as would have been his portrait by Raffaelle, in full consular splendour, on his ivory chair.

A relegation, you may say perhaps—a relegation of style to the subjectivity, the mere caprice, of the individual, which must soon transform it into mannerism. Not so! since there is, under the conditions supposed, for those elements of the man, for every lineament of the vision within, the one word, the one acceptable word, recognisable by the sensitive, by others "who have intelligence" in the matter, as absolutely as ever anything can be in the evanescent and delicate region of human language. The style, the manner, would be the man, not in his unreasoned and really uncharacteristic caprices, involuntary or affected, but in absolutely sincere apprehension of what is most real to him. But let us hear our French guide again.—

Styles (says Flaubert's commentator), Styles, as so many peculiar moulds, each of which bears the mark of a particular writer, who is to pour into it the whole content of his ideas, were no part of his theory. What he believed in was Style: that is to say, a certain absolute and unique manner of expressing a thing, in all its intensity and colour. For him the form was the work itself. As in living creatures, the blood, nourishing the body, determines its very contour and external aspect, just so, to his mind, the matter, the basis, in a work of art, imposed, necessarily, the unique, the just expression, the measure, the rhythm—the form in all its characteristics.

If the style be the man, in all the colour and intensity of a veritable apprehension, it will be in a real sense "impersonal."

I said, thinking of books like Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, that prose literature was the characteristic art of the nineteenth century, as others, thinking of its triumphs since the youth of Bach, have assigned that place to music. Music and prose literature are, in one sense, the opposite terms of art; the art of literature presenting to the imagination, through the intelligence, a range of interests, as free and various as those which music presents to it through sense. And certainly the tendency of what has been here said is to bring literature too under those conditions, by conformity to which music takes rank as the typically perfect art. If music be the ideal of all art whatever, precisely because in music it is impossible to distinguish the form from the substance or matter, the subject from the expression, then, literature,

by finding its specific excellence in the absolute correspondence of the term to its import, will be but fulfilling the condition of all artistic quality in things everywhere, of all good art.

Good art, but not necessarily great art; the distinction between great art and good art depending immediately, as regards literature at all events, not on its form, but on the matter. Thackeray's Esmond, surely, is greater art than Vanity Fair, by the greater dignity of its interests. It is on the quality of the matter it informs or controls, its compass, its variety, its alliance to great ends, or the depth of the note of revolt, or the largeness of hope in it, that the greatness of literary art depends, as *The Divine Comedy, Paradise Lost, Les Misérables, The English Bible*, are great art. Given the conditions I have tried to explain as constituting good art;—then, if it be devoted further to the increase of men's happiness, to the redemption of the oppressed, or the enlargement of our sympathies with each other, or to such presentment of new or old truth about ourselves and our relation to the world as may ennoble and fortify us in our sojourn here, or immediately, as with Dante, to the glory of God, it will be also great art; if, over and above those qualities I summed up as mind and soul—that colour and mystic perfume, and that reasonable structure, it has something of the soul of humanity in it, and finds its logical, its architectural place, in the great structure of human life.

1881.	Oscar **WILDE**. (1854-1900)
	A Parable. written between Easter and Christmas 1895.
	A Few Maxims for the Instruction of the Over-Educated. written 1894.
	Phrases And Philosophies For the Use Of the Young. written 1894.

A Parable.

written between Easter and Christmas 1895.

Christ came from a white plain to a purple city, and as He passed through the first street He heard voices overhead, and saw a young man lying drunk on a window-sill. 'Why do you waste your soul in drunkenness?' He said. 'Lord, I was a leper and You healed me, what else can I do?' . A little further through the town He saw a young man following a harlot, and said, 'Why do you dissolve your soul in debauchery?', and the young man answered, 'Lord, I was blind and You healed me, what else can I do?'. At last, in the middle of the city He saw an old man crouching, weeping on the ground, and when He asked why he wept, the old man answered, 'Lord, I was dead, and you raised me into life, what else can I do but weep?'.

A Few Maxims for the Instruction of the Over-Educated.

[First published, anonymously, in the 1894 November 17 issue of *Saturday Review*.]

Education is an admirable thing. But it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught.

Public opinion exists only where there are no ideas.

The English are always degrading truths into facts. When a truth becomes a fact it loses all its intellectual value.

It is a very sad thing that nowadays there is so little useless information.

The only link between Literature and Drama left to us in England at the present moment is the bill of the play.

In old days books were written by men of letters and read by the public. Nowadays books are written by the public and read by nobody.

Most women are so artificial that they have no sense of Art. Most men are so natural that they have no sense of Beauty.

Friendship is far more tragic than love. It lasts longer.

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What is abnormal in Life stands in normal relations to Art. It is the only thing in Life that stands in normal relations to Art.

A subject that is beautiful in itself gives no suggestion to the artist. It lacks imperfection.

The only thing that the artist cannot see is the obvious. The only thing that the public can see is the obvious. The result is the Criticism of the Journalist.

Art is the only serious thing in the world. And the artist is the only person who is never serious.

To be really mediæval one should have no body. To be really modern one should have no soul. To be really Greek one should have no clothes.

Dandyism is the assertion of the absolute modernity of Beauty.

The only thing that can console one for being poor is extravagance. The only thing that can console one for being rich is economy.

One should never listen. To listen is a sign of indifference to one's hearers.

Even the disciple has his uses. He stands behind one's throne, and at the moment of one's triumph whispers in one's ear that, after all, one is immortal.

The criminal classes are so close to us that even the policemen can see them. They are so far away from us that only the poet can understand them.

Those whom the gods love grow young.

Phrases And Philosophies For the Use Of the Young.

[First published in the 1894 December (and only) issue of the Oxford student magazine *The Chameleon*.]

The first duty in life is to be as artificial as possible. What the second duty is no one has as yet discovered.

Wickedness is a myth invented by good people to account for the curious attractiveness of others.

If the poor only had profiles there would be no difficulty in solving the problem of poverty.

Those who see any difference between soul and body have neither.

A really well-maded buttonhole is the only link between Art and Nature.

Religions die when they are proved to be true. Science is the record of dead religions.

The well-bred contradict other people. The wise contradict themselves.

Nothing that actually occurs is of the smallest importance.

Dullness is the coming of age of seriousness.

In all unimportant matters, style, not sincerity, is the essential. In all important matters, style, not sincerity, is the essential.

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If one tells the truth, one is sure, sooner or later, to be found out.

Pleasure is the only thing one should live for. Nothing ages like happiness.

It is only by not paying one's bills that one can hope to live in the memory of the commercial classes.

No crime is vulgar, but all vulgarity is crime. Vulgarity is the conduct of others.

Only the shallow know themselves.

Time is a waste of money.

One should always be a little improbable.

There is a fatality about all good resolutions. They are invariably made too soon.

The only way to atone for being occasionally a little over-dressed is by being always absolutely over-educated.

To be premature is to be perfect.

Any preoccupation with ideas of what is right and wrong in conduct shows an arrested intellectual development.

Ambition is the last refuge of the failure.

A truth ceases to be true when more than one person believes in it.

In examinations the foolish ask questions that the wise cannot answer.

Greek dress was in its essence inartistic. Nothing should reveal the body but the body.

One should either be a work of art, or wear a work of art.

It is only the superficial qualities that last. Man's deeper nature is soon found out.

Industry is the root of all ugliness.

The ages live in history through their anachronisms.

It is only the gods who taste of death. Apollo has passed away, but Hyacinth, whom men say he slew, lives on. Nero and Narcissus are always with us.

The old believe everything: the middle-aged suspect everything: the young know everything.

The condition of perfection is idleness: the aim of perfection is youth.

Only the great masters of style ever succeed in being obscure.

There is something tragic about the enormous number of young men there are in England at the present moment who start life with perfect profiles, and end by adopting some useful profession.

To love oneself is the beginning of a life-long romance.

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1884.	Kenneth **GRAHAME**. (1859-1932) *Pagan Papers*. written 1893.
	Non Libri Sed Liberi.
	Loafing.
	Cheap Knowledge.
	Of Smoking.

Non Libri Sed Liberi.

It will never be clear to the lay mind why the book-buyer buys books. That it is not to read them is certain: the closest inspection always fails to find him thus engaged. He will talk about them – all night if you let him – wave his hand to them, shake his fist at them, shed tears over them (in the small hours of the morning); but he will not read them. Yet it would be rash to infer that he buys his books without a remote intention of ever reading them. Most book lovers start with the honest resolution that some day they will "shut down on" this fatal practice. Then they purpose to themselves to enter into their charmed circle, and close the gates of Paradise behind them. Then will they read out of nothing but first editions; every day shall be a debauch in large paper and tall copies; and crushed morocco shall be familiar to their touch as buckram. Meanwhile, though, books continue to flaunt their venal charms; it would be cowardice to shun the fray. In fine, one buys and continues to buy; and the promised Sabbath never comes.

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The process of the purchase is always much the same, therein resembling the familiar but inferior passion of love. There is the first sight of the Object, accompanied of a catching of the breath, a trembling in the limbs, loss of appetite, ungovernable desire, and a habit of melancholy in secret places. But once possessed, once toyed with amorously for an hour or two, the Object (as in the inferior passion aforesaid) takes its destined place on the shelf – where it stays. And this saith the scoffer, is all; but even he does not fail to remark with a certain awe that the owner goeth thereafter as one possessing a happy secret and radiating an inner glow. Moreover, he is insufferably conceited, and his conceit waxeth as his coat, now condemned to a fresh term of servitude, groweth shabbier. And shabby though his coat may be, yet will he never stoop to renew its pristine youth and gloss by the price of any book. No man – no human, masculine, natural man – ever sells a book. Men have been known in moments of thoughtlessness, or compelled by temporary necessity, to rob, to equivocate, to do murder, to commit what they should not, to "wince and relent and refrain'' from what they should: these things, howbeit regrettable, are common to humanity, and may happen to any of us. But amateur bookselling is foul and unnatural; and it is noteworthy that our language, so capable of particularity, contains no distinctive name for the crime. Fortunately it is hardly known to exist: the face of the public being set against it as a flint – and the trade giving such wretched prices.

In book-buying you not infrequently condone an extravagance by the reflection that this particular purchase will be a good investment, sordidly considered: that you are not squandering income but sinking capital. But you know all the time that you are lying. Once possessed, books develop a personality: they take on a touch of warm human life that links them in a manner with our kith and kin. *Non angli sed Angeli* was the comment of a missionary (old style) on the small human duodecimos exposed for sale in the Roman market-place; and many a buyer, when some fair-haired little chattel passed into his possession, must have felt that

here was something vendible no more. So of these you may well affirm *Non libri sed liberi;* children now, adopted into the circle, they shall be trafficked in never again.

There is one exception which has sadly to be made – one class of men, of whom I would fain, if possible, have avoided mention, who are strangers to any such scruples. These be Executors – a word to be strongly accented on the penultimate; for, indeed, they are the common headsmen of collections, and most of all do whet their bloody edge for harmless books. Hoary, famous old collections, budding young collections, fair virgin collections of a single author – all go down before the executor's remorseless axe. He careth not and he spareth not. "The iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy,'' and it is chiefly by the hand of the executor that she doth love to scatter it. May oblivion be his portion for ever!

Of a truth, the foes of the book-lover are not few. One of the most insidious, because he cometh at first in friendly, helpful guise, is the bookbinder. Not in that he bindeth books – for the fair binding is the final crown and flower of painful achievement – but because he bindeth not: because the weary weeks lapse by and turn to months, and the months to years, and still the binder bindeth not: and the heart grows sick with hope deferred. Each morn the maiden binds her hair, each spring the honeysuckle binds the cottage-porch, each autumn the harvester binds his sheaves, each winter the iron frost binds lake and stream, and still the bookbinder he bindeth not. Then a secret voice whispereth: "Arise, be a man, and slay him! Take him grossly, full of bread, with all his crimes broad-blown, as flush as May; At gaming, swearing, or about some act That hath no relish of salvation in it!'' But when the deed is done, and the floor strewn with fragments of binder – still the books remain unbound. You have made all that horrid mess for nothing, and the weary path has to be trodden over again. As a general rule, the man in the habit of murdering bookbinders, though he performs a distinct service to society, only wastes his own time and takes no personal advantage.

And even supposing that after many days your books return to you in leathern surcoats bravely tricked with gold, you have scarce yet weathered the Cape

and sailed into halcyon seas. For these books – well, you kept them many weeks before binding them, that the oleaginous printer's-ink might fully dry before the necessary hammering; you forbore to open the pages, that the autocratic binder might refold the sheets if he pleased; and now that all is over – *consummatum est* – still you cannot properly enjoy the harvest of a quiet mind. For these purple emperors are not to be read in bed, nor during meals, nor on the grass with a pipe on Sundays; and these brief periods are all the whirling times allow you for solid serious reading. Still, after all, you have them; you can at least pulverise your friends with the sight; and what have they to show against them? Probably some miserable score or so of half-bindings, such as lead you scornfully to quote the hackneyed couplet concerning the poor Indian whose untutored mind clothes him before but leaves him bare behind. Let us thank the gods that such things are: that to some of us they give not poverty nor riches but a few good books in whole bindings. Dowered with these and (if it be vouchsafed) a cup of Burgundy that is sound even if it be not old, we can leave to others the foaming grape of Eastern France that was vintaged in '74, and with it the whole range of shilling shockers, – the Barmecidal feast of the purposeful novelist – yea, even the countless series that tell of Eminent Women and Successful Men.

Loafing.

When the golden Summer has rounded languidly to his close, when Autumn has been carried forth in russet winding-sheet, then all good fellows who look upon holidays as a chief end of life return from moor and stream and begin to take stock of gains and losses. And the wisest, realising that the time of action is over while that of reminiscence has begun, realize too that the one is pregnant with greater pleasures than the other – that action, indeed, is only the means to an end of reflection and

appreciation. Wisest of all, the Loafer stands apart supreme. For he, of one mind with the philosopher as to the end, goes straight to it at once; and his happy summer has accordingly been spent in those subjective pleasures of the mind whereof the others, the men of muscle and peeled faces, are only just beginning to taste.

And yet though he may a little despise (or rather pity) them, the Loafer does not dislike nor altogether shun them. Far from it: they are very necessary to him. For *"Suave mari magno''* is the motto of your true Loafer; and it is chiefly by keeping ever in view the struggles and the clamorous jostlings of the unenlightened making holiday that he is able to realize the bliss of his own condition and maintain his self-satisfaction at boiling-point. And so is he never very far away from the track beaten by the hurrying Philistine hoof, but hovers more or less on the edge of it, where, the sole fixed star amidst whirling constellations, he may watch the mad world "glance, and nod, and hurry by.''

There are many such centres of contemplation along the West Coast of Scotland. Few places are better loafing-ground than a pier, with its tranquil "lucid interval'' between steamers, the ever recurrent throb of paddle-wheel, the rush and foam of beaten water among the piles, splash of ropes and rumble of gangways, and all the attendant hurry and scurry of the human morrice. Here, *tanquam in speculo,* the Loafer as he lounges may, by attorney as it were, touch gently every stop in the great organ of the emotions of mortality. Rapture of meeting, departing woe, love at first sight, disdain, laughter, indifference – he may experience them all, but attenuated and as if he saw them in a dream; as if, indeed, he were Heine's god in dream on a mountain-side. Let the drowsy deity awake and all these puppets, emanations of his dream, will vanish into the nothing whence they came. And these emotions may be renewed each morning; if a fair one sail to-day, be sure that one as fair will land to-morrow. The supply is inexhaustible.

But in the South perhaps the happiest loafing-ground is the gift of Father Thames; for there again the contrast of violent action, with its blisters, perspiration, and the like, throws into fine relief the bliss of "quietism.'' I know one little village in

the upper reaches where loafing may be pushed to high perfection. Here the early hours of the morning are vexed by the voices of boaters making their way down the little street to the river. The most of them go staggering under hampers, bundles of waterproofs, and so forth. Their voices are clamant of feats to be accomplished: they will row, they will punt, they will paddle, till they weary out the sun. All this the Loafer hears through the open door of his cottage, where in his shirt-sleeves he is dallying with his bacon, as a gentleman should. He is the only one who has had a comfortable breakfast – and he knows it. Later he will issue forth and stroll down in their track to the bridge. The last of these Argonauts is pulling lustily forth; the river is dotted with evanishing blazers. Upon all these lunatics a pitiless Phoebus shines triumphant. The Loafer sees the last of them off the stage, turns his back on it, and seeks the shady side of the street.

A holy calm possesses the village now; the foreign element has passed away with shouting and waving of banners, and its natural life of somnolency is in evidence at last. And first, as a true Loafer should, let him respectfully greet each several village dog. *Arcades ambo* – loafers likewise – they lie there in the warm dust, each outside his own door, ready to return the smallest courtesy. Their own lords and masters are not given to the exchange of compliments nor to greetings in the market-place. The dog is generally the better gentleman, and he is aware of it; and he duly appreciates the loafer, who is not too proud to pause a moment, change the news, and pass the time of day. He will mark his sense of this attention by rising from his dust-divan and accompanying his caller some steps on his way. But he will stop short of his neighbour's dust-patch; for the morning is really too hot for a shindy. So, by easy stages (the street is not a long one: six dogs will see it out), the Loafer quits the village; and now the world is before him. Shall he sit on a gate and smoke? or lie on the grass and smoke? or smoke aimlessly and at large along the road? Such a choice of happiness is distracting; but perhaps the last course is the best – as needing the least mental effort of selection. Hardly, however, has he fairly started his first daydream when the snappish "ting" of a bellkin recalls him to

realities. By comes the bicyclist: dusty, sweating, a piteous thing to look upon. But the irritation of the strepitant metal has jarred the Loafer's always exquisite nerves: he is fain to climb a gate and make his way towards solitude and the breezy downs. Up here all vestiges of a sordid humanity disappear. The Loafer is alone with the south-west wind and the blue sky. Only a carolling of larks and a tinkling from distant flocks break the brooding noonday stillness; above, the wind-hover hangs motionless, a black dot on the blue. Prone on his back on the springy turf, gazing up into the sky, his fleshy integument seems to drop away, and the spirit ranges at will among the tranquil clouds. This way Nirvana nearest lies. Earth no longer obtrudes herself; possibly somewhere a thousand miles or so below him the thing still "spins like a fretful midge.'' The Loafer knows not nor cares. His is now an astral body, and through golden spaces of imagination his soul is winging her untrammelled flight. And there he really might remain for ever, but that his vagrom spirit is called back to earth by a gentle but resistless, very human summons, – a gradual, consuming, Pantagruelian, god-like, thirst: a thirst to thank Heaven on. So, with a sigh half of regret, half of anticipation, he bends his solitary steps towards the nearest inn. Tobacco for one is good; to commune with oneself and be still is truest wisdom; but beer is a thing of deity – beer is divine.

Later the Loafer may decently make some concession to popular taste by strolling down to the river and getting out his boat. With one paddle out he will drift down the stream: just brushing the flowering rush and the meadow-sweet and taking in as peculiar gifts the varied sweets of even. The loosestrife is his, and the arrow-head: his the distant moan of the weir; his are the glories, amber and scarlet and silver, of the sunset-haunted surface. By-and-by the boaters will pass him homeward-bound. All are blistered and sore: his withers are unwrung. Most are too tired and hungry to see the sunset glories; no corporeal pangs clog his *æsthesis* – his perceptive faculty. Some have quarrelled in the day and are no longer on speaking terms; he is at peace with himself and with the whole world. Of all that lay them down in the little village that night, his sleep will be the surest and the sweetest. For

not even the blacksmith himself will have better claim to have earned a night's repose.

Cheap Knowledge.

When at times it happens to me that I 'gin to be aweary of the sun, and to find the fair apple of life dust and ashes at the core – just because, perhaps, I can't afford Melampus Brown's last volume of poems in large paper, but must perforce condescend upon the two-and-sixpenny edition for the million – then I bring myself to a right temper by recalling to memory a sight which now and again in old days would touch the heart of me to a happier pulsation. In the long, dark winter evenings, outside some shop window whose gaslight flared brightest into the chilly street, I would see some lad – sometimes even a girl – book in hand, heedless of cold and wet, of aching limbs and straining eyes, careless of jostling passers-by, of rattle and turmoil behind them and about, their happy spirits far in an enchanted world: till the ruthless shopman turned out the gas and brought them rudely back to the bitter reality of cramped legs and numbed fingers. "My brother!'' or "My sister!'' I would cry inwardly, feeling the link that bound us together. They possessed, for the hour, the two gifts most precious to the student – light and solitude: the true solitude of the roaring street.

Somehow this vision rarely greets me now. Probably the Free Libraries have supplanted the flickering shop lights; and every lad and lass can enter and call for Miss Braddon and batten thereon "in luxury's sofa-lap of leather''; and of course this boon is appreciated and profited by, and we shall see the divine results in a year or two. And yet sometimes, like the dear old Baron in the "Red Lamp,'' "I wonder?''
For myself, public libraries possess a special horror, as of lonely wastes and dragon-haunted fens. The stillness and the heavy air, the feeling of restriction and

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surveillance, the mute presence of these other readers, "all silent and all damned,'' combine to set up a nervous irritation fatal to quiet study. Had I to choose, I would prefer the windy street. And possibly others have found that the removal of checks and obstacles makes the path which leads to the divine mountain-tops less tempting, now that it is less rugged. So full of human nature are we all – still – despite the Radical missionaries that labour in the vineyard. Before the National Gallery was extended and rearranged, there was a little "St Catherine'' by Pinturicchio that possessed my undivided affections. In those days she hung near the floor, so that those who would worship must grovel; and little I grudged it. Whenever I found myself near Trafalgar Square with five minutes to spare I used to turn in and sit on the floor before the object of my love, till gently but firmly replaced on my legs by the attendant. She hangs on the line now, in the grand new room; but I never go to see her. Somehow she is not my "St Catherine'' of old. Doubtless Free Libraries affect many students in the same way: on the same principle as that now generally accepted – that it is the restrictions placed on vice by our social code which make its pursuit so peculiarly agreeable.

But even when the element of human nature has been fully allowed for, it remains a question whether the type of mind that a generation or two of Free Libraries will evolve is or is not the one that the world most desiderates; and whether the spare reading and consequent fertile thinking necessitated by the old, or gas-lamp, style is not productive of sounder results. The cloyed and congested mind resulting from the free run of these grocers' shops to omnivorous appetites (and all young readers are omnivorous) bids fair to produce a race of literary resurrection-men: a result from which we may well pray to be spared. Of all forms of lettered effusiveness that which exploits the original work of others and professes to supply us with right opinions thereanent is the least wanted. And whether he take to literary expression by pen or only wag the tongue of him, the grocer's boy of letters is sure to prove a prodigious bore. The Free Library, if it be fulfilling the programme of its advocates, is breeding such as he by scores.

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But after all there is balm in Gilead; and much joy and consolation may be drawn from the sorrowful official reports, by which it would appear that the patrons of these libraries are confining their reading, with a charming unanimity, exclusively to novels. And indeed they cannot do better; there is no more blessed thing on earth than a good novel, not the least merit of which is that it induces a state of passive, unconscious enjoyment, and never frenzies the reader to go out and put the world right. Next to fairy tales – the original world-fiction – our modern novels may be ranked as our most precious possessions; and so it has come to pass that I shall now cheerfully pay my five shillings, or ten shillings, or whatever it may shortly be, in the pound towards the Free Library: convinced at last that the money is not wasted in training exponents of the subjectivity of this writer and the objectivity of that, nor in developing fresh imitators of dead discredited styles, but is righteously devoted to the support of wholesome, honest, unpretending novel-reading.

Of Smoking.

Concerning Cigarette Smoking: It hath been well observed by a certain philosopher that this is a practice commendable enough, and pleasant to indulge in, "when you're not smoking"; wherein the whole criticism of the cigarette is found, in a little room. Of the same manner of thinking was one that I knew, who kept by him an ample case bulging with cigarettes, to smoke while he was filling his pipe. Toys they be verily, *nugæ,* and shadows of the substance. Serviceable, nevertheless, as shadows sometimes be when the substance is temporarily unattainable; as between the acts of a play, in the park, or while dressing for dinner: that such moments may not be entirely wasted. That cigarette, however, which is so prompt to appear after dinner I would reprehend and ban and totally abolish: as enemy to that diviner thing

before which it should pale its ineffectual fires in shame – to wit, good drink, *"la dive bouteille''*; except indeed when the liquor be bad, as is sometimes known to happen. Then it may serve in some sort as a sorry consolation. But to leave these airy substitutes, and come to smoking.

It hath been ofttimes debated whether the morning pipe be the sweeter, or that first pipe of the evening which "Hesperus, who bringeth all good things,'' brings to the weary with home and rest. The first is smoked on a clearer palate, and comes to unjaded senses like the kiss of one's first love; but lacks that feeling of perfect fruition, of merit recompensed and the goal and the garland won, which clings to the vesper bowl. Whence it comes that the majority give the palm to the latter. To which I intend no slight when I find the incense that arises at matins sweeter even than that of evensong. For, although with most of us who are labourers in the vineyard, toilers and swinkers, the morning pipe is smoked in hurry and fear and a sense of alarums and excursions and fleeting trains, yet with all this there are certain halcyon periods sure to arrive – Sundays, holidays, and the like – the whole joy and peace of which are summed up in that one beatific pipe after breakfast, smoked in a careless majesty like that of the gods "when they lie beside their nectar, and the clouds are lightly curled.'' Then only can we be said really to smoke. And so this particular pipe of the day always carries with it festal reminiscences: memories of holidays past, hopes for holidays to come; a suggestion of sunny lawns and flannels and the ungirt loin; a sense withal of something free and stately, as of "faint march-music in the air,'' or the old Roman cry of "Liberty, freedom, and enfranchisement.''

If there be any fly in the pipe-smoker's ointment, it may be said to lurk in the matter of "rings.'' Only the exceptionally gifted smoker can recline in his chair and emit at will the perfect smoke-ring, in consummate eddying succession. He of the meaner sort must be content if, at rare heaven-sent intervals – while thinking, perhaps, of nothing less – there escape from his lips the unpremeditated flawless circle. Then *"deus fio''* he is moved to cry, at that breathless moment when his

creation hangs solid and complete, ere the particles break away and blend with the baser atmosphere. Nay, some will deny to any of us terrene smokers the gift of fullest achievement: for what saith *the* poet of the century? "On the earth the broken arcs: in the heaven the perfect round!''

It was well observed by a certain character in one of Wilkie Collins's novels (if an imperfect memory serveth me rightly) that women will take pleasure in scents derived from animal emanations, clarified fats, and the like; yet do illogically abhor the "clean, dry, vegetable smell'' of tobacco. Herein the true base of the feminine objection is reached; being, as usual, inherent want of logic rather than any distaste, in the absolute, for the thing in question. Thinking that they ought to dislike, they do painfully cast about for reasons to justify their dislike, when none really exist. As a specimen of their so-called arguments, I remember how a certain fair one triumphantly pointed out to me that my dog, though loving me well, could yet never be brought to like the smell of tobacco. To whom I, who respected my dog (as Ben saith of Master Shakespeare) on this side idolatry as much as anything, was yet fain to point out – more in sorrow than in anger – that a dog, being an animal who delights to pass his whole day, from early morn to dewy eve, in shoving his nose into every carrion beastliness that he can come across, could hardly be considered *arbiter elegantiarum* in the matter of smells. But indeed I did wrong to take such foolish quibbling seriously; nor would I have done so, if she hadn't dragged my poor innocent dog into the discussion.

Of Smoking in Bed: There be who consider this a depravity – an instance of that excess in the practice of a virtue which passes into vice – and couple it with dram-drinking: who yet fail to justify themselves by argument. For if bed be by common consent the greatest bliss, the divinest spot, on earth, *"ille terrarum qui præter omnes angulus ridet'';* and if tobacco be the true Herb of Grace, and a joy and healing balm, and respite and nepenthe, – if all this be admitted, why are two things, super-excellent separately, noxious in conjunction? And is not the Bed Smoker rather an epicure in pleasure – self indulgent perhaps, but still the triumphant creator of a

new "blend,'' reminding one of a certain traveller's account of an intoxicant patronised in the South Sea Islands, which combines the blissful effect of getting drunk and remaining sober to enjoy it? Yet I shall not insist too much on this point, but would only ask – so long as the smoker be unwedded – for some tolerance in the matter and a little logic in the discussion thereof.

Concerning Cigars: That there be large sums given for these is within common knowledge. 1 *d.*, 2 *d.*, nay even 4 *d.*, is not too great a price, if a man will have of the finest leaf, reckless of expense. In this sort of smoking, however, I find more of vainglory and ostentation than solid satisfaction; and its votaries would seem to display less a calm, healthy affection for tobacco than (as Sir T. Browne hath it) a "passionate prodigality.'' And, besides grievous wasting of the pocket, atmospheric changes, varyings in the crops, and the like, cause uncertainty to cling about each individual weed, so that man is always more or less at the mercy of Nature and the elements – an unsatisfactory and undignified position in these latter days of the Triumphant Democracy. But worst and fatallest of all, to every cigar-smoker it is certain to happen that once in his life, by some happy combination of time, place, temperament, and Nature – by some starry influence, maybe, or freak of the gods in mocking sport – once, and once only, he will taste the aroma of the perfect leaf at just the perfect point – the ideal cigar. Henceforth his life is saddened; as one kissed by a goddess in a dream, he goes thereafter, as one might say, in a sort of love-sickness. Seeking he scarce knows what, his existence becomes a dissatisfied yearning; the world is spoiled for him, its joys are tasteless: so he wanders, vision-haunted, down dreary days to some miserable end.

Yet, if one will walk this path and take the risks, the thing may be done at comparatively small expense. To such I would commend the Roman motto, slightly altered – *Alieni appetens, sui avarus.* There be always good fellows, with good cigars for their friends. Nay, too, the boxes of these lie open; an the good cigar belongs rather to him that can appreciate it aright than to the capitalist who, owing to a false social system, happens to be its temporary guardian and trustee. Again there is a

saying – bred first, I think, among the schoolmen at Oxford – that it is the duty of a son to live up to his father's income. Should any young man have found this task too hard for him, after the most strenuous and single-minded efforts, at least he can resolutely smoke his father's cigars. In the path of duty complete success is not always to be looked for; but an approving conscience, the sure reward of honest endeavour, is within reach of all.

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1895. Hilaire **BELLOC**. (1870-1953)

A Conversation with a Cat. written 1931.

The other day I went into the bar of a railway station and, taking a glass of beer, I sat down at a little table by myself to meditate upon the necessary but tragic isolation of the human soul. I began my meditation by consoling myself with the truth that something in common runs through all nature, but I went on to consider that this cut no ice, and that the heart needed something more. I might by long research have discovered some third term a little less hackneyed than these two, when fate, or some fostering star, sent me a tawny silky, long-haired cat.

If it be true that nations have the cats they deserve, then the English people deserve well in cats, for there are none so prosperous or so friendly in the world. But even for an English cat this cat was exceptionally friendly and fine—especially friendly. It leapt at one graceful bound into my lap, nestled there, put out an engaging right front paw to touch my arm with a pretty timidity by way of introduction, rolled up at me an eye of bright but innocent affection, and then smiled a secret smile of approval.

No man could be timid after such an approach as not to make some manner of response. So did I. I even took the liberty of stroking Amathea (for by that name did I receive this vision), and thought I began this gesture in a respectful fashion, after the best models of polite deportment with strangers, I was soon lending it some warmth, for I was touched to find that I had a friend; yes, even here, at the ends of the tubes in S.W. 99. I proceeded (as is right) from caress to speech, and said, "Amathea, most beautiful of cats, why have you deigned to single me out for so

much favour? Did you recognise in me a friend to all that breathes, or were you yourself suffering from loneliness (though I take it you are near your own dear home), or is there pity in the hearts of animals as there is in the hearts of some humans? What, then, was your motive? Or am I, indeed, foolish to ask, and not rather to take whatever good comes to me in whatever way from the gods?"

To these questions Amathea answered with a loud purring noise, expressing with closed eyes of ecstasy her delight in the encounter.

"I am more than flattered, Amathea," said I, by way of answer; "I am consoled. I did not know that there was in the world anything breathing and moving, let alone so tawny-perfect, who would give companionship for its own sake and seek out, through deep feeling, some one companion out of all living kind. If you do not address me in words I know the reason and I commend it; for in words lie the seeds of all dissension, and love at its most profound is silent. At least, I read that in a book, Amathea; yes, only the other day. But I confess that the book told me nothing of those gestures which are better than words, or of that caress which I continue to bestow upon you with all the gratitude of my poor heart."

To this Amathea made a slight gesture of acknowledgement—not disdainful—wagging her head a little, and then settling it down in deep content.

"Oh, beautiful-haired Amathea, many have praised you before you found me to praise you, and many will praise you, some in your own tongue, when I am no longer held in the bonds of your presence. But none will praise you more sincerely. For there is not a man living who knows better than I that the four charms of a cat lie in its closed eyes, its long and lovely hair, its silence, and even its affected love."

But at the word affected Amathea raised her head, looked up at me tenderly, once more put forth her paw to touch my arm, and then settled down again to a purring beatitude.

"You are secure," said I sadly; "mortality is not before you. There is in your complacency no foreknowledge of death nor even of separation. And for that reason, Cat, I welcome you the more. For if there has been given to your kind this repose in

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common living, why, then, we men also may find it by following your example and not considering too much what may be to come and not remembering too much what has been and will never return. Also, I thank you, for this, Amathea, my sweet Euplokamos" (for I was becoming a little familiar through an acquaintance of a full five minutes and from the absence of all recalcitrance), "that you have reminded me of my youth, and in a sort of shadowy way, a momentary way, have restored it to me. For there is an age, a blessed youthful age (O my Cat) even with the miserable race of men, when all things are consonant with the life of the body, when sleep is regular and long and deep, when enmities are either unknown or a subject for rejoicing and when the whole of being is lapped in hope as you are now lapped on my lap, Amathea. Yes, we also, we of the doomed race, know peace. But whereas you possess it from blind kittenhood to that last dark day so mercifully short with you, we grasp it only for a very little while. But I would not sadden you by the mortal plaint. That would be treason indeed, and a vile return for your goodness. What! When you have chosen me out of seven London millions upon whom to confer the tender solace of heart, when you have proclaimed yourself so suddenly to be my dear, shall I introduce you to the sufferings of those of whom you know nothing save that they feed you, house you and pass you by? At least you do not take us for gods, as do the dogs, and the more am I humbly beholden to you for this little service of recognition—and something more."

Amathea slowly raised herself upon her four feet, arched her back, yawned, looked up at me with a smile sweeter than ever and then went round and round, preparing for herself a new couch upon my coat, where on she settled and began once more to purr in settled ecstasy.

Already had I made sure that a rooted and anchored affection had come to me from out the emptiness and nothingness of the world and was to feed my soul henceforward; already had I changed the mood of long years and felt a conversion towards the life of things, an appreciation, a cousinship with the created light—and all that through one new link of loving kindness—when whatever it is that dashes

the cup of bliss from the lips of mortal man (Tupper) up and dashed it good and hard. It was the Ancient Enemy who put the fatal sentence into my heart, for we are the playthings of the greater powers, and surely some of them are evil.

"You will never leave me. Amathea," I said: "I will respect your sleep and we will sit here together through all uncounted time, I holding you in my arms and you dreaming of the fields of Paradise. Nor shall anything part us. Amathea; you are my cat and I am your human. Now and onwards into the fullness of peace."

Then it was that Amathea lifted herself once more, and with delicate, discreet, unweighted movement of perfect limbs leapt lightly to the floor as lovely as a wave. She walked slowly away from me without so much as looking back over her shoulder; she had another purpose in her mind; and as she so gracefully and so majestically neared the door which she was seeking, a short, unpleasant man standing at the bar said, "Puss, Puss, Puss!" and stooped to scratch her gently behind the ear. With what a wealth of singular affection, pure and profound, did she not gaze up at him, and then rub herself against his leg in token and external expression of a sacramental friendship that should never die.

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1899. G. K. **CHESTERTON**. (1874-1936)

A Defence of Nonsense. written 1902.

There are two equal and eternal ways of looking at this twilight world of ours: we may see it as the twilight of evening or the twilight of morning; we may think of anything, down to a fallen acorn, as a descendant or as an ancestor. There are times when we are almost crushed, not so much with the load of the evil as with the load of the goodness of humanity, when we feel that we are nothing but the inheritors of a humiliating splendour. But there are other times when everything seems primitive, when the ancient stars are only sparks blown from a boy's bonfire, when the whole earth seems so young and experimental that even the white hair of the aged, in the fine biblical phrase, is like almond-trees that blossom, like the white hawthorn grown in May. That it is good for a man to realize that he is 'the heir of all the ages' is pretty commonly admitted; it is a less popular but equally important point that it is good for him sometimes to realize that he is not only an ancestor, but an ancestor of primal antiquity; it is good for him to wonder whether he is not a hero, and to experience ennobling doubts as to whether he is not a solar myth.

The matters which most thoroughly evoke this sense of the abiding childhood of the world are those which are really fresh, abrupt and inventive in any age; and if we were asked what was the best proof of this adventurous youth in the nineteenth century we should say, with all respect to its portentous sciences and philosophies, that it was to be found in the rhymes of Mr Edward Lear and in the literature of nonsense. 'The Dong with the Luminous Nose,' at least, is original, as the first ship and the first plough were original.

It is true in a certain sense that some of the greatest writers the world has seen—Aristophanes, Rabelais and Sterne—have written nonsense; but unless we are mistaken, it is in a widely different sense. The nonsense of these men was satiric—that is to say, symbolic; it was a kind of exuberant capering round a discovered truth. There is all the difference in the world between the instinct of satire, which, seeing in the Kaiser's moustaches something typical of him, draws them continually larger and larger; and the instinct of nonsense which, for no reason whatever, imagines what those moustaches would look like on the present Archbishop of Canterbury if he grew them in a fit of absence of mind. We incline to think that no age except our own could have understood that the Quangle-Wangle meant absolutely nothing, and the Lands of the Jumblies were absolutely nowhere. We fancy that if the account of the knave's trial in 'Alice in Wonderland' had been published in the seventeenth century it would have been bracketed with Bunyan's 'Trial of Faithful' as a parody on the State prosecutions of the time. We fancy that if 'The Dong with the Luminous Nose' had appeared in the same period everyone would have called it a dull satire on Oliver Cromwell.

It is altogether advisedly that we quote chiefly from Mr Lear's 'Nonsense Rhymes.' To our mind he is both chronologically and essentially the father of nonsense; we think him superior to Lewis Carroll. In one sense, indeed, Lewis Carroll has a great advantage. We know what Lewis Carroll was in daily life: he was a singularly serious and conventional don, universally respected, but very much of a pedant and something of a Philistine. Thus his strange double life in earth and in dreamland emphasises the idea that lies at the back of nonsense—the idea of *escape*, of escape into a world where things are not fixed horribly in an eternal appropriateness, where apples grow on pear-trees, and any odd man you meet may have three legs. Lewis Carroll, living one life in which he would have thundered morally against any one who walked on the wrong plot of grass, and another life in which he would cheerfully call the sun green and the moon blue, was, by his very divided nature, his one foot on both worlds, a perfect type of the position of modern

nonsense. His Wonderland is a country populated by insane mathematicians. We feel the whole is an escape into a world of masquerade; we feel that if we could pierce their disguises, we might discover that Humpty Dumpty and the March Hare were Professors and Doctors of Divinity enjoying a mental holiday. This sense of escape is certainly less emphatic in Edward Lear, because of the completeness of his citizenship in the world of unreason. We do not know his prosaic biography as we know Lewis Carroll's. We accept him as a purely fabulous figure, on his own description of himself:

'His body is perfectly spherical, He weareth a runcible hat.'

While Lewis Carroll's Wonderland is purely intellectual, Lear introduces quite another element—the element of the poetical and even emotional. Carroll works by the pure reason, but this is not so strong a contrast; for, after all, mankind in the main has always regarded reason as a bit of a joke. Lear introduces his unmeaning words and his amorphous creatures not with the pomp of reason, but with the romantic prelude of rich hues and haunting rhythms.

'Far and few, far and few, Are the lands where the Jumblies live,'

is an entirely different type of poetry to that exhibited in 'Jabberwocky.' Carroll, with a sense of mathematical neatness, makes his whole poem a mosaic of new and mysterious words. But Edward Lear, with more subtle and placid effrontery, is always introducing scraps of his own elvish dialect into the middle of simple and rational statements, until we are almost stunned into admitting that we know what they mean. There is a genial ring of commonsense about such lines as,

'For his aunt Jobiska said "Every one knows That a Pobble is better without his toes,"'

which is beyond the reach of Carroll. The poet seems so easy on the matter that we are almost driven to pretend that we see his meaning, that we know the peculiar difficulties of a Pobble, that we are as old travellers in the 'Gromboolian Plain' as he is.

Our claim that nonsense is a new literature (we might almost say a new sense) would be quite indefensible if nonsense were nothing more than a mere aesthetic fancy. Nothing sublimely artistic has ever arisen out of mere art, any more than anything essentially reasonable has ever arisen out of the pure reason. There must always be a rich moral soil for any great aesthetic growth. The principle of *art for art's sake* is a very good principle if it means that there is a vital distinction between the earth and the tree that has its roots in the earth; but it is a very bad principle if it means that the tree could grow just as well with its roots in the air. Every great literature has always been allegorical--allegorical of some view of the whole universe. The 'Iliad' is only great because all life is a battle, the 'Odyssey' because all life is a journey, the Book of Job because all life is a riddle. There is one attitude in which we think that all existence is summed up in the word 'ghosts'; another, and somewhat better one, in which we think it is summed up in the words 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.' Even the vulgarest melodrama or detective story can be good if it expresses something of the delight in sinister possibilities--the healthy lust for darkness and terror which may come on us any night in walking down a dark lane. If, therefore, nonsense is really to be the literature of the future, it must have its own version of the Cosmos to offer; the world must not only be the tragic, romantic, and religious, it must be nonsensical also. And here we fancy that nonsense will, in a very unexpected way, come to the aid of the spiritual view of things. Religion has for centuries been trying to make men exult in the 'wonders' of creation, but it has forgotten that a thing cannot be completely wonderful so long as it remains sensible. So long as we regard a tree as an obvious thing, naturally and reasonably created for a giraffe to eat, we cannot properly wonder at it. It is when we

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consider it as a prodigious wave of the living soil sprawling up to the skies for no reason in particular that we take off our hats, to the astonishment of the park-keeper. Everything has in fact another side to it, like the moon, the patroness of nonsense. Viewed from that other side, a bird is a blossom broken loose from its chain of stalk, a man a quadruped begging on its hind legs, a house a gigantesque hat to cover a man from the sun, a chair an apparatus of four wooden legs for a cripple with only two.

This is the side of things which tends most truly to spiritual wonder. It is significant that in the greatest religious poem existent, the Book of Job, the argument which convinces the infidel is not (as has been represented by the merely rational religionism of the eighteenth century) a picture of the ordered beneficence of the Creation; but, on the contrary, a picture of the huge and undecipherable unreason of it. 'Hast Thou sent the rain upon the desert where no man is?' This simple sense of wonder at the shapes of things, and at their exuberant independence of our intellectual standards and our trivial definitions, is the basis of spirituality as it is the basis of nonsense. Nonsense and faith (strange as the conjunction may seem) are the two supreme symbolic assertions of the truth that to draw out the soul of things with a syllogism is as impossible as to draw out Leviathan with a hook. The well-meaning person who, by merely studying the logical side of things, has decided that 'faith is nonsense,' does not know how truly he speaks; later it may come back to him in the form that nonsense is faith.

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1907. A.A. **MILNE**. (1882-1956)

A Village Celebration. written 1921.

Although our village is a very small one, we had fifteen men serving in the Forces before the war was over. Fortunately, as the Vicar well said, "we were wonderfully blessed in that none of us was called upon to make the great sacrifice." Indeed, with the exception of Charlie Rudd, of the Army Service Corps, who was called upon to be kicked by a horse, the village did not even suffer any casualties. Our rejoicings at the conclusion of Peace were whole-hearted.

Naturally, when we met to discuss the best way in which to give expression to our joy, our first thoughts were with our returned heroes. Miss Travers, who plays the organ with considerable expression on Sundays, suggested that a drinking fountain erected on the village green would be a pleasing memorial of their valour, if suitably inscribed. For instance, it might say, "In gratitude to our brave defenders who leaped to answer their country's call," followed by their names. Embury, the cobbler, who is always a wet blanket on these occasions, asked if "leaping" was the exact word for a young fellow who got into khaki in 1918, and then only in answer to his country's police. The meeting was more lively after this, and Mr Bates, of Hill Farm, had to be personally assured by the Vicar that for his part he quite understood how it was that young Robert Bates had been unable to leave the farm before, and he was sure that our good friend Embury meant nothing personal by his, if he might say so, perhaps somewhat untimely observation. He would suggest himself that some such phrase as "who gallantly answered" would be more in keeping with Miss Travers' beautiful idea. He would venture to put it to the meeting that the inscription should be amended in this sense.

Mr Clayton, the grocer and draper, interrupted to say that they were getting on too fast. Supposing they agreed upon a drinking fountain, who was going to do it? Was it going to be done in the village, or were they going to get sculptors and architects and such-like people from London? And if so The Vicar caught the eye of Miss Travers, and signalled to her to proceed; whereupon she explained that, as she had already told the Vicar in private, her nephew was studying art in London, and she was sure he would be only too glad to get Augustus James or one of those Academy artists to think of something really beautiful.

At this moment Embury said that he would like to ask two questions. First question – In what order were the names of our gallant defenders to be inscribed? The Vicar said that, speaking entirely without preparation and on the spur of the moment, he would imagine that an alphabetical order would be the most satisfactory. There was a general "Hear, hear," led by the Squire, who thus made his first contribution to the debate. "That's what I thought," said Embury. "Well, then, second question – What's coming out of the fountain?" The Vicar, a little surprised, said that presumably, my dear Embury, the fountain would give forth water. "Ah!" said Embury with great significance, and sat down.

Our village is a little slow at getting on to things; "leaping" is not the exact word for our movements at any time, either of brain or body. It is not surprising, therefore, that even Bates failed to realize for a moment that his son's name was to have precedence on a water-fountain. But when once he realized it, he refused to be pacified by the cobbler's explanation that he had only said "Ah!" Let those who had anything to say, he observed, speak out openly, and then we should know where we were. Embury's answer, that one could generally guess where some people were, and not be far wrong, was drowned in the ecclesiastical applause which greeted the rising of the Squire.

The Squire said that he – er – hadn't – er – intended – er – to say anything. But he thought – er – if he might – er – intervene – to – er – say something on the matter of – er – a matter which – er – well, they all knew what it was – in short – er – money.

Because until they knew how they – er – stood, it was obvious that – it was obvious – quite obvious – well it was a question of how they stood. Whereupon he sat down.

The Vicar said that as had often happened before, the sound common-sense of Sir John had saved them from undue rashness and precipitancy. They were getting on a little too fast. Their valued friend Miss Travers had made what he was not ashamed to call a suggestion both rare and beautiful, but alas! in these prosaic modern days the sordid question of pounds, shillings and pence could not be wholly disregarded. How much money would they have?

Everybody looked at Sir John. There was an awkward silence, in which the Squire joined....

Amid pushings and whisperings from his corner of the room, Charlie Rudd said that he would just like to say a few words for the boys, if all were willing. The Vicar said that certainly, certainly he might, my dear Rudd. So Charlie said that he would just like to say that with all respect to Miss Travers, who was a real lady, and many was the packet of fags he'd had from her out there, and all the other boys could say the same, and if some of them joined up sooner than others, well perhaps they did, but they all tried to do their bit, just like those who stayed at home, and they'd thrashed Jerry, and glad of it, fountains or no fountains, and pleased to be back again and see them all, just the same as ever, Mr Bates and Mr Embury and all of them, which was all he wanted to say, and the other boys would say the same, hoping no offence was meant, and that was all he wanted to say.

When the applause had died down, Mr Clayton said that, in his opinion, as he had said before, they were getting on too fast. Did they want a fountain, that was the question. Who wanted it? The Vicar replied that it would be a beautiful memento for their children of the stirring times through which their country had passed. Embury asked if Mr Bates' child wanted a memento of – „This is a general question, my dear Embury," said the Vicar.

There rose slowly to his feet the landlord of the Dog and Duck. Celebrations, he said. We were celebrating this here peace. Now, as man to man, what did

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celebrations mean? He asked any of them. What did it mean? Celebrations meant celebrating, and celebrating meant sitting down hearty-like, sitting down like Englishmen and – and celebrating. First, find how much money they'd got, same as Sir John said; that was right and proper. Then if so be as they wanted to leave the rest to him, well he'd be proud to do his best for them. They knew him. Do fair by him and he'd do fair by them. Soon as he knew how much money they'd got, and how many were going to sit down, then he could get to work. That was all he'd got to say about celebrations.

The enthusiasm was tremendous. Rut the Vicar looked anxious, and whispered to the Squire. The Squire shrugged his shoulders and murmured something, and the Vicar rose. They would be all glad to hear, he said, glad but not surprised, that with his customary generosity the Squire had decided to throw open his own beautiful gardens and pleasure-grounds to them on Peace Day and to take upon his own shoulders the burden of entertaining them. He would suggest that they now give Sir John three hearty cheers. This was done, and the proceedings closed.

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1919. Aldous **HUXLEY**. (1894-1963)

I Am a Highbrow. written ?1933

To a great extent, of course, it is just a matter of taste. I am a highbrow for the same reason as I am an eater of strawberries. I enjoy the eating of strawberries and I enjoy the process and experiences, which are commonly qualified by the name of highbrow. Conversely, I am not a lowbrow, because I do not enjoy lowbrow process and experiences. Thus I derive a great deal less pleasure from dance music and thrillers than from the music, let us say, of Beethoven or the novels, for example, of Dostoyevsky; and the sex appeal of the girls on the covers of magazine seems to me less thrilling than the more complicated appeal to a great variety of feelings made by Rubens, an El Greco, a Constable, a Seurat. Again, I find the watching of a horse race or football matches less agreeable as an occupation than the acquisition and coordination of knowledge. Reading seems to me more entertaining than bridge or crossword puzzle. And the slaughtering of animals for fun is a pastime that leaves me either cold with disgust or hot with indignation. There is no disputing, says the proverb, about taste—though, in fact human beings spend at least half their leisure doing nothing else—and if high-browism and low-browism were exclusively (as it is certain that they are in great part) matters of individual taste, there would be no more to say about them than what I have said in the preceding lines.

But more than mere taste is at stake; and, realizing this, the supporters of either party have rationalized their preferences in terms of arguments that involve an appeal to more objective standards than those of simple personal preferences. Thus lowbrows are never weary of condemning highbrows for their "inhumanity", nor of admiring themselves for being so admirable "human". At the same time, they

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argue that they must be **in the tight** because they are so much more numerous than the highbrows. To the attacks of lowbrows (attacks which have grown increasingly vocal and violent in the course of the last few years), the highbrows generally reply in a tone of patronizing contempt. They start, like the Pharisee in the parable, by thanking God that they are not as other men are, and proceed to paint a picture of those men, hardly more flattering than that which Swift painted of Yahoos. Then, explicitly or implicitly, they associate their highbrowism with virtue, and speak of their own learned refinement as good and of their adversaries' ignorance and crudity as bad. Each party's arguments seem to me equally futile and each party's emotional attitude equally deplorable. Thus the lowbrows appeal to numbers cuts no ice at all. In 1600 the earth was not the centre of the universe because the majority then supposed it was; nor, because she had more readers, was Ella Wheeler Wilcox a better poet than Father Hopkins. As for lowbrows' claim to be specially "human", I for one have never been able to understand why it should be "inhuman" to use the faculties that distinguish us from pigs and geese, and "human" to use those which we share the lower animals. The highbrows reverse the numerical argument and imply that, because they are so few, they must therefore be right. But where they chiefly offend is in their pharisaical self-congratulation and contempt for others. In the past, the highbrows were alone in expressing a feeling of superiority; the lowbrows humbly accepted the position assigned to them. Recently, however, there has been a change, and lowbrows adopt towards highbrows exactly the same attitude as highbrows have always adopted towards them. Each highbrow did and does congratulate himself on being unique in his unlikeness to other men; and conversely each lowbrow now congratulates himself on being in some mystical way unique in his likeness – on being, so to say, outstandingly average and extraordinarily ordinary. The snarling of their respective egotisms add yet another discordant note to the contemporary babel. In point of fact, the question of rightness or wrongness simply does not enter into the dispute. The difference between highbrows and lowbrows is essentially quantitative, not qualitative. In certain

respects (though not, perhaps, in others) the life of the highbrow is fuller than of the lowbrow. He is interested in a greater number and a greater variety of things; and his knowledge enables him rationally to coordinate more facts of experience than the lowbrow can do. The lowbrow lives in a world where events are isolated and unconnected; the highbrow, in one where knowledge has fused these isolated happenings into what is at least a partially comprehensible whole. In a certain sense, even the works of art admired by highbrows are quantitatively more considerable than the works admired by lowbrows. A Dostoyevsky novel contains, explicitly or by implication, all that a thriller contains, plus a great deal more. The emotionalism which makes popular music popular is there in the best music, but it is transformed, refined and given a general significance by its association with other things. The works of art appreciated by highbrows are in general qualitatively superior to those appreciated by lowbrows; and the effort to comprehend qualitatively superior work leads to an enrichment, a filling out of experience. But even if these works were not qualitatively superior, they would still contribute to a fullness of experience by quantitatively more substantial and extensive. Now the fuller life is not, as such, good; nor, as such, is the emptier life bad. Any kind of life is only the raw material out of which individuals can make goodness or badness. Whether the relatively full life of highbrows is a more suitable material out of which to manufacture goodness than the relatively empty life of lowbrows, I do not know; but I think that, under whole, it maybe. That its content, judged by aesthetic and scientific standards, is intrinsically richer and more significant than the content of the typical lowbrow life, seems to me to be unquestionable. No less obvious is the fact that there are great numbers of people so constituted or so brought up that they cannot get so much pleasure out of processes and experiences which result in a rich, significant life, as they can get out of processes and experiences resulting in a poorer life less full of meaning. We are back again where we started, among the taste and capacities of individual.

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1909. Gilbert **FRANKAU**. (1884-1952)

I Am A Lowbrow. written ?1933.

I am overtempted to quote against Mr Huxley:

I do not look for holy saints to guide me on my way,
Or male and female devilkins to lead my feet astray.
If these are added, I rejoice – if not, I shall not mind,
So long as I have leave and choice to meet my fellow-kind.
For as we come and as we go (and deadly-soon go we)
The People, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me.

But that is Kipling, whom the sight of gallant men on gallant horses pelting over high timber at the risk of their necks in pursuit of a fox fills neither with cold disgust nor hot indignation!

Besides, Kipling ends his poem:

Deliver me from every pride – the Middle, High, and Low –
That bars me from a brother's side, whatever pride he show.

So I prefer to sympathise with Mr Huxley and his brother highbrows because, really, they do miss such a lot of fun.

I cannot agree with my fellow-novelist, you see, that the life of the highbrow is relatively fuller than the life of the lowbrow. I believe it to be emptier.

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And when he says that his "content" is intrinsically richer and more significant than mine, the very use of that word "significant" (hall-mark of all highbrows) gives me a slight pain.

For to me every manifestation of life is equally significant – whether it be a manly sport or those "private symbols" which our modern poets use to shield their private emotions from the contaminating crowd.

I cannot understand why Aldous Huxley should believe himself a better man than I am – or even than Gunga Din – because he finds the sex appeal of a Harrison Fisher girl less thrilling than that of a seventeenth-century beauty as depicted by Rubens. Neither does it seem to me a proof of virtue that his book entertains him more than my bridge, while his statement that human beings spend at least half their leisure in disputing about tastes does not smack, to my essentially lowbrow mind, of the truth.

Highbrows may delight in such discussions, but for us, presumably lower organisms, the scant hours of leisure are too precious to waste in idle talk.

We are the Sons of Martha, and most of our day is spent in toil. Released from toil, we demand our simple enjoyments, claiming nothing for those enjoyments except that they help to relax either mind or body – for we lowbrows are still humble folk.

Mr Huxley is wrong – and possibly just a little too self-conscious – when he imagines us snarling at him for his enjoyment of Beethoven or Dostoievsky. We are quite content for him to have his symphonies and his Russian novels if only he will leave us alone with our jazz and our detective stories.

But the trouble is that he won't, and that he simply cannot get it into his great brain that our interests are just as wide as, and possibly even wider than, his own.

He claims the larger experience, and that we live in a world where events are "isolated and unconnected." He maintains that his knowledge can fuse "isolated happenings into what is at least a partly comprehensible whole."

I suggest the Apostle's "Much learning doth make thee mad."

We lowbrows do not believe overmuch in learning – unless it is the study of our own particular trade. We hold that life is a simple affair of work and play, and that in almost every difficulty conscience and common sense are the truest guides.

And although we share Mr Huxley's respect for true science, which deals with material phenomena, we hold, with the dead satirist, that all Art is apt to be useless – unless the artist can convey the complexity of his own experience in simple words, in simple sounds, in simple brush-strokes, to us.

In this attitude towards Art, it seems to my small brain, has germinated the one and only quarrel between the highbrow and the lowbrow. The lowbrow says, in effect, "Be clear"; the highbrow, "It is clear, if only you weren't such a moron."

This is mere ju-juism. This is mere snobbery. Yet it is worthy of a lowbrow's sympathy, because most of us practise our ju-jus. Most of us are given to a little harmless snobbery when we ply our own particular trade.

There was never a good workman without a slight superiority complex. The motor mechanic who tunes your engine is just as keen to make his craft a mystery as the surgeon who operates on your body or the barrister who conducts your case.

So why shouldn't the author of such fine books as *Point Counterpoint* and *Brave New World* indulge his superiority complex? Why shouldn't he bear 'mid snow and ice his banner with that strange device, "Significant"?

I, a humble lowbrow, admire him all the more for it – even if I do hold that he might be a better artist if he could sympathise with the roaring crowd at a Cup Final.

But perhaps he does. Perhaps, secretly, he even envies the tired business man wrestling with his crossword puzzle.

For all heights are lonely. And surely even Mr Huxley must yearn, every now and again amidst his snow and ice, for the warm companionship of kindly, ordinary, everyday men and women, the kind who pick his strawberries for him – and might even read poetry if only a true poet would write to them in simple language of the simple things they know and love!

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1922. William **FAULKNER**. (1897-1962)

The Nobel Address. written and pronounced 1950.

Banquet Speech*

William Faulkner's speech at the Nobel Banquet at the City Hall in Stockholm, December 10, 1950

Ladies and gentlemen,

I feel that this award was not made to me as a man, but to my work - a life's work in the agony and sweat of the human spirit, not for glory and least of all for profit, but to create out of the materials of the human spirit something which did not exist before. So this award is only mine in trust. It will not be difficult to find a dedication for the money part of it commensurate with the purpose and significance of its origin. But I would like to do the same with the acclaim too, by using this moment as a pinnacle from which I might be listened to by the young men and women already dedicated to the same anguish and travail, among whom is already that one who will some day stand here where I am standing.

Our tragedy today is a general and universal physical fear so long sustained by now that we can even bear it. There are no longer problems of the spirit. There is only the question: When will I be blown up? Because of this, the young man or woman writing today has forgotten the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat.

He must learn them again. He must teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid; and, teaching himself that, forget it forever, leaving no room in

his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed - love and honour and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice. Until he does so, he labours under a curse. He writes not of love but of lust, of defeats in which nobody loses anything of value, of victories without hope and, worst of all, without pity or compassion. His griefs grieve on no universal bones, leaving no scars. He writes not of the heart but of the glands.

Until he relearns these things, he will write as though he stood among and watched the end of man. I decline to accept the end of man. It is easy enough to say that man is immortal simply because he will endure: that when the last dingdong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock hanging tideless in the last red and dying evening, that even then there will still be one more sound: that of his puny inexhaustible voice, still talking.

I refuse to accept this. I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honour and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past. The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail.

* The speech was apparently revised by the author for publication in *The Faulkner Reader.* These minor changes, all of which improve the address stylistically have been incorporated here.

From *Nobel Lectures, Literature 1901-1967*, Editor Horst Frenz, Elsevier Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 1969

1928. George **ORWELL**. (1903-1950)

Politics and the English Language. written 1946.

Most people who bother with the matter at all would admit that the English language is in a bad way, but it is generally assumed that we cannot by conscious action do anything about it. Our civilization is decadent and our language – so the argument runs – must inevitably share in the general collapse. It follows that any struggle against the abuse of language is a sentimental archaism, like preferring candles to electric light or hansom cabs to aeroplanes. Underneath this lies the half-conscious belief that language is a natural growth and not an instrument which we shape for our own purposes.

Now, it is clear that the decline of a language must ultimately have political and economic causes: it is not due simply to the bad influence of this or that individual writer. But an effect can become a cause, reinforcing the original cause and producing the same effect in an intensified form, and so on indefinitely. A man may take to drink because he feels himself to be a failure, and then fail all the more completely because he drinks. It is rather the same thing that is happening to the English language. It becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts. The point is that the process is reversible. Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble. If one gets rid of these habits one can think more clearly, and to think clearly is a necessary first step toward political regeneration: so that the fight against bad English is not frivolous and is not the

exclusive concern of professional writers. I will come back to this presently, and I hope that by that time the meaning of what I have said here will have become clearer. Meanwhile, here are five specimens of the English language as it is now habitually written.

These five passages have not been picked out because they are especially bad – I could have quoted far worse if I had chosen – but because they illustrate various of the mental vices from which we now suffer. They are a little below the average, but are fairly representative examples. I number them so that I can refer back to them when necessary:

> 1. I am not, indeed, sure whether it is not true to say that the Milton who once seemed not unlike a seventeenth-century Shelley had not become, out of an experience ever more bitter in each year, more alien *[sic]* to the founder of that Jesuit sect which nothing could induce him to tolerate.
>
> Professor Harold Laski (Essay in *Freedom of Expression*)
>
> 2. Above all, we cannot play ducks and drakes with a native battery of idioms which prescribes egregious collocations of vocables as the Basic *put up with* for *tolerate* , or *put at a loss* for *bewilder* .
>
> Professor Lancelot Hogben (*Interglossa*)
>
> 3. On the one side we have the free personality: by definition it is not neurotic, for it has neither conflict nor dream. Its desires, such as they are, are transparent, for they are just what institutional approval keeps in the forefront of consciousness; another institutional pattern would alter their number and intensity; there is little in them that is natural, irreducible, or culturally dangerous. But *on the other side* , the social bond itself is nothing but the mutual reflection of these self-secure integrities. Recall the definition of

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love. Is not this the very picture of a small academic? Where is there a place in this hall of mirrors for either personality or fraternity?

Essay on psychology in *Politics* (New York)

4. All the "best people" from the gentlemen's clubs, and all the frantic fascist captains, united in common hatred of Socialism and bestial horror at the rising tide of the mass revolutionary movement, have turned to acts of provocation, to foul incendiarism, to medieval legends of poisoned wells, to legalize their own destruction of proletarian organizations, and rouse the agitated petty-bourgeoisie to chauvinistic fervour on behalf of the fight against the revolutionary way out of the crisis.

Communist pamphlet

5. If a new spirit is to be infused into this old country, there is one thorny and contentious reform which must be tackled, and that is the humanization and galvanization of the B.B.C. Timidity here will bespeak canker and atrophy of the soul. The heart of Britain may be sound and of strong beat, for instance, but the British lion's roar at present is like that of Bottom in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – as gentle as any sucking dove. A virile new Britain cannot continue indefinitely to be traduced in the eyes or rather ears, of the world by the effete languors of Langham Place, brazenly masquerading as "standard English." When the Voice of Britain is heard at nine o'clock, better far and infinitely less ludicrous to hear aitches honestly dropped than the present priggish, inflated, inhibited, school-ma'amish arch braying of blameless bashful mewing maidens!

Letter in *Tribune*

Each of these passages has faults of its own, but, quite apart from avoidable ugliness, two qualities are common to all of them. The first is staleness of imagery;

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the other is lack of precision. The writer either has a meaning and cannot express it, or he inadvertently says something else, or he is almost indifferent as to whether his words mean anything or not. This mixture of vagueness and sheer incompetence is the most marked characteristic of modern English prose, and especially of any kind of political writing. As soon as certain topics are raised, the concrete melts into the abstract and no one seems able to think of turns of speech that are not hackneyed: prose consists less and less of *words* chosen for the sake of their meaning, and more and more of *phrases* tacked together like the sections of a prefabricated henhouse. I list below, with notes and examples, various of the tricks by means of which the work of prose construction is habitually dodged:

Dying metaphors. A newly invented metaphor assists thought by evoking a visual image, while on the other hand a metaphor which is technically "dead" (e.g. *iron resolution*) has in effect reverted to being an ordinary word and can generally be used without loss of vividness. But in between these two classes there is a huge dump of worn-out metaphors which have lost all evocative power and are merely used because they save people the trouble of inventing phrases for themselves. Examples are: ***Ring the changes on, take up the cudgel for, toe the line, ride roughshod over, stand shoulder to shoulder with, play into the hands of, no axe to grind, grist to the mill, fishing in troubled waters, on the order of the day, Achilles' heel, swan song, hotbed.*** Many of these are used without knowledge of their meaning (what is a "rift," for instance?), and incompatible metaphors are frequently mixed, a sure sign that the writer is not interested in what he is saying. Some metaphors now current have been twisted out of their original meaning without those who use them even being aware of the fact. For example, *toe the line* is sometimes written as *tow the line* . Another example is *the hammer and the anvil* , now always used with the implication that the anvil gets the worst of it. In real life it is always the anvil that breaks the hammer, never the other way about: a writer who stopped to think what he was saying would avoid perverting the original phrase.

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Operators or verbal false limbs. These save the trouble of picking out appropriate verbs and nouns, and at the same time pad each sentence with extra syllables which give it an appearance of symmetry. Characteristic phrases are ***render inoperative, militate against, make contact with, be subjected to, give rise to, give grounds for, have the effect of, play a leading part (role) in, make itself felt, take effect, exhibit a tendency to, serve the purpose of, etc.,etc***. The keynote is the elimination of simple verbs. Instead of being a single word, such as *break, stop, spoil, mend, kill*, a verb becomes a *phrase* , made up of a noun or adjective tacked on to some general-purpose verb such as *prove, serve, form, play, render* . In addition, the passive voice is wherever possible used in preference to the active, and noun constructions are used instead of gerunds (*by examination of* instead of *by examining*). The range of verbs is further cut down by means of the *-ise* and *de-* formations, and the banal statements are given an appearance of profundity by means of the *not un-* formation. Simple conjunctions and prepositions are replaced by such phrases as *with respect to, having regard to, the fact that, by dint of, in view of, in the interests of, on the hypothesis that* ; and the ends of sentences are saved by anticlimax by such resounding commonplaces as *greatly to be desired, cannot be left out of account, a development to be expected in the near future, deserving of serious consideration, brought to a satisfactory conclusion* , and so on and so forth.

Pretentious diction. Words like *phenomenon, element, individual* (as noun), *objective, categorical, effective, virtual, basic, primary, promote, constitute, exhibit, exploit, utilize, eliminate, liquidate* , are used to dress up a simple statement and give an air of scientific impartiality to biased judgements. Adjectives like *epoch-making, epic, historic, unforgettable, triumphant, age-old, inevitable, inexorable, veritable* , are used to dignify the sordid process of international politics, while writing that aims at glorifying war usually takes on an archaic colour, its characteristic words being: *realm, throne, chariot, mailed fist, trident, sword, shield, buckler, banner, jackboot, clarion* . Foreign words and expressions such as *cul de sac, ancien régime, deus ex machina, mutatis mutandis, status quo, gleichschaltung, weltanschauung* , are used to give an air of culture and elegance. Except for the useful abbreviations *i.e., e.g.* , and *etc.* , there is

no real need for any of the hundreds of foreign phrases now current in the English language. Bad writers, and especially scientific, political, and sociological writers, are nearly always haunted by the notion that Latin or Greek words are grander than Saxon ones, and unnecessary words like *expedite, ameliorate, predict, extraneous, deracinated, clandestine, subaqueous*, and hundreds of others constantly gain ground from their Anglo-Saxon numbers. The jargon peculiar to Marxist writing (*hyena, hangman, cannibal, petty bourgeois, these gentry, lackey, flunkey, mad dog, White Guard* , etc.) consists largely of words translated from Russian, German, or French; but the normal way of coining a new word is to use Latin or Greek root with the appropriate affix and, where necessary, the size formation. It is often easier to make up words of this kind (*deregionalize, impermissible, extramarital, non-fragmentary* and so forth) than to think up the English words that will cover one's meaning. The result, in general, is an increase in slovenliness and vagueness.

Meaningless words. In certain kinds of writing, particularly in art criticism and literary criticism, it is normal to come across long passages which are almost completely lacking in meaning. Words like *romantic, plastic, values, human, dead, sentimental, natural, vitality* , as used in art criticism, are strictly meaningless, in the sense that they not only do not point to any discoverable object, but are hardly ever expected to do so by the reader. When one critic writes, "The outstanding feature of Mr X's work is its living quality," while another writes, "The immediately striking thing about Mr X's work is its peculiar deadness," the reader accepts this as a simple difference opinion. If words like *black* and *white* were involved, instead of the jargon words *dead* and *living*, he would see at once that language was being used in an improper way.

Many political words are similarly abused. The word *Fascism* has now no meaning except in so far as it signifies "something not desirable." The words *democracy, socialism, freedom, patriotic, realistic, justice* have each of them several different meanings which cannot be reconciled with one another. In the case of a word like *democracy*, not only is there no agreed definition, but the attempt to make

one is resisted from all sides. It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic we are praising it: consequently, the defenders of every kind of regime claim that it is a democracy, and fear that they might have to stop using that word if it were tied down to any one meaning. Words of this kind are often used in a consciously dishonest way. That is, the person who uses them has his own private definition, but allows his hearer to think he means something quite different. Statements like *Marshal Petain was a true patriot, The Soviet press is the freest in the world, The Catholic Church is opposed to persecution,* are almost always made with intent to deceive. Other words used in variable meanings, in most cases more or less dishonestly, are: *class, totalitarian, science, progressive, reactionary, bourgeois, equality*.

Now that I have made this catalogue of **swindles** and **perversions**, let me give another example of the kind of writing that they lead to. This time it must of its nature be an imaginary one. I am going to translate a passage of good English into modern English of the worst sort. Here is a well-known verse from *Ecclesiastes* (9:11):

> I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Here it is in modern English:

> Objective considerations of contemporary phenomena compel the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account.

This is a parody, but not a very gross one. Exhibit (3) above, for instance, contains several patches of the same kind of English. It will be seen that I have not

made a full translation. The beginning and ending of the sentence follow the original meaning fairly closely, but in the middle the concrete illustrations – race, battle, bread – dissolve into the vague phrases "success or failure in competitive activities." This had to be so, because no modern writer of the kind I am discussing – no one capable of using phrases like "objective considerations of contemporary phenomena" – would ever tabulate his thoughts in that precise and detailed way. The whole tendency of modern prose is away from concreteness. Now analyse these two sentences a little more closely. The first contains **forty-nine** words but only **sixty** syllables, and all its words are those of everyday life. The second contains **thirty-eight** words of **ninety** syllables: **eighteen** of those words are from **Latin** roots, and one from **Greek**. The first sentence contains six vivid images, and only one phrase ("time and chance") that could be called vague. The second contains not a single fresh, arresting phrase, and in spite of its ninety syllables it gives only a shortened version of the meaning contained in the first. Yet without a doubt it is the second kind of sentence that is gaining ground in modern English. I do not want to exaggerate. This kind of writing is not yet universal, and outcrops of simplicity will occur here and there in the worst-written page. Still, **if you or I were told to write a few lines on the uncertainty of human fortunes, we should probably come much nearer to my imaginary sentence than to the one from *Ecclesiastes***. As I have tried to show, modern writing at its worst does not consist in picking out words for the sake of their meaning and inventing images in order to make the meaning clearer. It consists in **gumming together long strips of words which have already been set in order by someone else**, and making the results presentable by sheer humbug. The attraction of this way of writing is that it is easy. It is easier – even quicker, once you have the habit – to say *In my opinion it is not an unjustifiable assumption that* than to say *I think*. If you use ready-made phrases, you not only don't have to hunt about for the words; you also don't have to bother with the rhythms of your sentences since these phrases are generally so arranged as to be more or less euphonious. When you are composing in a hurry – when you are dictating to a stenographer, for instance, or

making a public speech – it is natural to fall into a pretentious, Latinised style. Tags like *a consideration which we should do well to bear in mind* or *a conclusion to which all of us would readily assent* will save many a sentence from coming down with a bump. By using stale metaphors, similes, and idioms, you **save much mental effort**, at the cost of leaving your meaning vague, not only for your reader but for yourself. This is the significance of mixed metaphors. The sole aim of a metaphor is to call up a visual image. When these images clash – as in *The Fascist octopus has sung its swan song, the jackboot is thrown into the melting pot* – it can be taken as certain that the writer is not seeing a mental image of the objects he is naming; in other words **he is not really thinking.** Look again at the examples I gave at the beginning of this essay. Professor Laski (1) uses **five** negatives in **fifty three** words. One of these is superfluous, making nonsense of the whole passage, and in addition there is the slip – *alien* for akin – making further nonsense, and several avoidable pieces of clumsiness which increase the general vagueness. Professor Hogben (2) plays ducks and drakes with a battery which is able to write prescriptions, and, while disapproving of the everyday phrase *put up with*, is unwilling to look *egregious* up in the dictionary and see what it means; (3), if one takes an uncharitable attitude towards it, is simply meaningless: probably one could work out its intended meaning by reading the whole of the article in which it occurs. In (4), the writer knows more or less what he wants to say, but an accumulation of stale phrases chokes him like tea leaves blocking a sink. In (5), words and meaning have almost parted company. People who write in this manner usually have a general emotional meaning – they dislike one thing and want to express solidarity with another – but they are not interested in the detail of what they are saying. A scrupulous writer, in every sentence that he writes, will ask himself at least four questions, thus:

1. What am I trying to say?
2. What words will express it?
3. What image or idiom will make it clearer?
4. Is this image fresh enough to have an effect?

And he will probably ask himself two more:

1. Could I put it more shortly?

2. Have I said anything that is avoidably ugly?

But you are not obliged to go to all this trouble. You can shirk it by simply throwing your mind open and letting the ready-made phrases come crowding in. The will construct your sentences for you – even think your thoughts for you, to a certain extent – and at need they will perform the important service of partially concealing your meaning even from yourself. It is at this point that the special connection between politics and the debasement of language becomes clear.

In our time it is broadly true that political writing is bad writing. Where it is not true, it will generally be found that the writer is some kind of rebel, expressing his private opinions and not a "party line." Orthodoxy, of whatever colour, seems to demand a lifeless, imitative style. The political dialects to be found in pamphlets, leading articles, manifestoes, White papers and the speeches of undersecretaries do, of course, vary from party to party, but they are all alike in that one almost never finds in them a fresh, vivid, homemade turn of speech. When one watches some tired hack on the platform mechanically repeating the familiar phrases – *bestial, atrocities, iron heel, bloodstained tyranny, free peoples of the world, stand shoulder to shoulder* – one often has a curious feeling that one is not watching a live human being but some kind of dummy: a feeling which suddenly becomes stronger at moments when the light catches the speaker's spectacles and turns them into blank discs which seem to have no eyes behind them. And this is not altogether fanciful. A speaker who uses that kind of phraseology has gone some distance toward turning himself into a machine. The appropriate noises are coming out of his larynx, but his brain is not involved as it would be if he were choosing his words for himself. If the speech he is making is one that he is accustomed to make over and over again, he may be almost unconscious of what he is saying, **as one is when one utters the responses in church.** And this reduced state of consciousness, if not indispensable, is at any rate favourable to political conformity.

In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible. Things like the continuance of British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, can indeed be defended, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of the political parties. Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. Defenceless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called *pacification*. Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called *transfer of population* or *rectification of frontiers*. People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: this is called *elimination of unreliable elements*. Such phraseology is needed if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them. Consider for instance some comfortable English professor defending Russian totalitarianism. He cannot say outright, "I believe in killing off your opponents when you can get good results by doing so." Probably, therefore, he will say something like this:

> "While freely conceding that the Soviet regime exhibits certain features which the humanitarian may be inclined to deplore, we must, I think, agree that a certain curtailment of the right to political opposition is an unavoidable concomitant of transitional periods, and that the rigors which the Russian people have been called upon to undergo have been amply justified in the sphere of concrete achievement."

The inflated style itself is a kind of euphemism. A mass of Latin words falls upon the facts like soft snow, blurring the outline and covering up all the details. The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and

exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish spurting out ink. In our age there is no such thing as "keeping out of politics." All issues are political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred, and schizophrenia. When the general atmosphere is bad, **language must suffer**. I should expect to find – this is a guess which I have not sufficient knowledge to verify – that the German, Russian and Italian languages have all deteriorated in the last ten or fifteen years, as a result of dictatorship.

But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought. A bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation even among people who should and do know better. The debased language that I have been discussing is in some ways very convenient. Phrases like *a not unjustifiable assumption, leaves much to be desired, would serve no good purpose, a consideration which we should do well to bear in mind,* are a continuous temptation, a packet of aspirins always at one's elbow. Look back through this essay, and for certain you will find that I have again and again committed the very faults I am protesting against. By this morning's post I have received a pamphlet dealing with conditions in Germany. The author tells me that he "felt impelled" to write it. I open it at random, and here is almost the first sentence I see: "[The Allies] have an opportunity not only of achieving a radical transformation of Germany's social and political structure in such a way as to avoid a nationalistic reaction in Germany itself, but at the same time of laying the foundations of a co-operative and unified Europe." You see, he "feels impelled" to write – feels, presumably, that he has something new to say – and yet his words, like cavalry horses answering the bugle, group themselves automatically into the familiar dreary pattern. This invasion of one's mind by ready-made phrases (*lay the foundations, achieve a radical transformation*) can only be prevented if one is constantly on guard against them, and every such phrase anaesthetises a portion of one's brain.

I said earlier that **the decadence of our language is probably curable**. Those who deny this would argue, if they produced an argument at all, that language merely reflects existing social conditions, and that we cannot influence its development by any direct tinkering with words and constructions. So far as the general tone or spirit

of a language goes, this may be true, but it is not true in detail. Silly words and expressions have often disappeared, not through any evolutionary process but owing to the conscious action of a minority. Two recent examples were *explore every avenue* and *leave no stone unturned* , which were killed by the jeers of a few journalists. There is a long list of flyblown metaphors which could similarly be got rid of if enough people would interest themselves in the job; and it should also be possible to laugh the *not un-* formation out of existence, to reduce the amount of Latin and Greek in the average sentence, to drive out foreign phrases and strayed scientific words, and, in general, to make pretentiousness unfashionable. But all these are minor points. **The defence of the English language implies more than this,** and perhaps it is best to start by saying what it does *not* imply.

To begin with it has nothing to do with archaism, with the salvaging of obsolete words and turns of speech, or with the setting up of a "standard English" which must never be departed from. On the contrary, it is especially concerned with the scrapping of every word or idiom which has outworn its usefulness. It has nothing to do with correct grammar and syntax, which are of no importance so long as one makes one's meaning clear, or with the avoidance of Americanisms, or with having what is called a "good prose style." On the other hand, it is not concerned with fake simplicity and the attempt to make written English colloquial. Nor does it even imply in every case preferring the Saxon word to the Latin one, though it does imply using the fewest and shortest words that will cover one's meaning. What is above all needed is to let the meaning choose the word, and not the other way around. In prose, **the worst thing one can do with words is surrender to them.** When you think of a concrete object, you think wordlessly, and then, if you want to describe the thing you have been visualizing you probably hunt about until you find the exact words that seem to fit it. When you think of something abstract you are more inclined to use words from the start, and unless you make a conscious effort to prevent it, the existing dialect will come rushing in and do the job for you, at the expense of blurring or even changing your meaning. Probably it is better to put off

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using words as long as possible and get one's meaning as clear as one can through pictures and sensations. Afterward one can choose – not simply *accept* – the phrases that will best cover the meaning, and then switch round and decide what impressions one's words are likely to make on another person. This last effort of the mind cuts out all stale or mixed images, all prefabricated phrases, needless repetitions, and humbug and vagueness generally. But one can often be in doubt about the effect of a word or a phrase, and one needs rules that one can rely on when instinct fails. I think the following rules will cover most cases:

1. Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
2. Never us a long word where a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

These rules sound elementary, and so they are, but they demand a deep change of attitude in anyone who has grown used to writing in the style now fashionable. One could keep all of them and still write bad English, but one could not write the kind of stuff that I quoted in those five specimens at the beginning of this article.

I have not here been considering the literary use of language, but merely language as an instrument for expressing and not for concealing or preventing thought. Stuart Chase and others have come near to claiming that all abstract words are meaningless, and have used this as a pretext for advocating a kind of political quietism. **Since you don't know what Fascism is, how can you struggle against Fascism?** One need not swallow such absurdities as this, but one ought to recognise

that the present political chaos is connected with the decay of language, and that one can probably bring about some improvement by starting at the verbal end. If you simplify your English, you are freed from the worst follies of orthodoxy. You cannot speak any of the necessary dialects, and when you make a stupid remark its stupidity will be obvious, even to yourself. **Political language** – and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists – **is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable**, and **to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.** One cannot change this all in a moment, but one can at least change one's own habits, and from time to time one can even, if one jeers loudly enough, send some worn-out and useless phrase – some *jackboot, Achilles' heel, hotbed, melting pot, acid test, veritable inferno,* or other lump of verbal refuse – into the dustbin, where it belongs.

1930. C.P. **SNOW**. (1905-1980)

***The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution.* The Rede Lecture**. written 1959.

Part One.

C.P. Snow's *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution. The Rede Lecture* was published by Cambridge University Press in 1959.

It is about three years since I made a sketch in print of a problem which had been on my mind for some time [1]. It was a problem I could not avoid just because of the circumstances of my life. The only credentials I had to ruminate on the subject at all came through those circumstances, through nothing more than a set of chances. Anyone with similar experience would have seen much the same things and I think made very much the same comments about them. It just happened to be an unusual experience. By training I was a scientist: by vocation I was a writer. That was all. It was a piece of luck, if you like, that arose through coming from a poor home.

But my personal history isn't the point now. All that I need say is that I came to Cambridge and did a bit of research here at a time of major scientific activity. I was privileged to have a ringside view of one of the most wonderful creative periods in all physics. And it happened through the flukes of war – including meeting W. L. Bragg in the buffet on Kettering station on a very cold morning in 1939, which had a determining influence on my practical life – that I was able, and indeed morally forced, to keep that ringside view ever since. So for thirty years I have had to be in touch with scientists not only out of curiosity, but as part of a working existence.

During the same thirty years I was trying to shape the books I wanted to write, which in due course took me among writers.

There have been plenty of days when I have spent the working hours with scientists and then gone off at night with some literary colleagues. I mean that literally. I have had, of course, intimate friends among both scientists and writers. It was through living among these groups and much more, I think, through moving regularly from one to the other and back again that I got occupied with the problem of what, long before I put it on paper, I christened to myself as the 'two cultures'. For constantly I felt I was moving among two groups – comparable in intelligence, identical in race, not grossly different in social origin, earning about the same incomes – who had almost ceased to communicate at all, who in intellectual, moral and psychological climate had so little in common that instead of going from Rurlington House or South Kensington to Chelsea, one might have crossed an ocean. In fact, one had travelled much further than across an ocean – because after a few thousand Atlantic miles, one found Greenwich Village talking precisely the same language as Chelsea, and both having about as much communication with M.I.T. as though the scientists spoke nothing but Tibetan. For this is not just our problem; owing to some of our educational and social idiosyncrasies, it is slightly exaggerated here, owing to another English social peculiarity it is slightly minimised; by and large this is a problem of the entire West.

By this I intend something serious. I am not thinking of the pleasant story of how one of the more convivial Oxford great dons – I have heard the story attributed to A. L. Smith – came over to Cambridge to dine. The date is perhaps the 1890s. I think it must have been at St. John's, or possibly Trinity. Anyway, Smith was sitting at the right hand of the President—or Vice-Master – and he was a man who liked to include all round him in the conversation, although he was not immediately encouraged by the expressions of his neighbours. He addressed some cheerful Oxonian chitchat at the one opposite to him, and got a grunt. He then tried the man on his own right hand and got another grunt. Then, rather to his surprise, one

looked at the other and said, "Do you know what he's talking about?" "I haven't the least idea." At this, even Smith was getting out of his depth. But the President, acting as a social emollient, put him at his ease by saying, "Oh, those are mathematicians! We never talk to ***them.***"

No, I intend something serious. I believe the intellectual life of the whole of western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups. When I say the intellectual life, I mean to include also a large part of our practical life, because I should be the last person to suggest the two can at the deepest level be distinguished. I shall come back to the practical life a little later. Two polar groups: at one pole we have the literary intellectuals, who incidentally while no one was looking took to referring to themselves as 'intellectuals' as though there were no others. I remember G. H. Hardy once remarking to me in mild puzzlement, some time in the 1930s: "Have you noticed how the word 'intellectual' is used nowadays? There seems to be a new definition which certainly doesn't include Rutherford or Eddington or Ilirac or Adrian or me. It does seem rather odd, don't y'know?" [2].

Literary intellectuals at one pole – at the other scientists, and as the most representative, the physical scientists. Between the two a gulf of mutual incomprehension – sometimes (particularly among the young) hostility and dislike, but most of all lack of understanding. They have a curious distorted image of each other. Their attitudes are so different that, even on the level of emotion, they can't find much common ground. Non-scientists tend to think of scientists as brash and boastful. They hear Mr T. S. Eliot, who just for these illustrations we can take as an archetypal figure, saying about his attempts to revive verse-drama that we can hope for very little, but that he would feel content if he and his co-workers could prepare the ground for a new Kyd or a new Greene. That is the tone, restricted and constrained, with which literary intellectuals are at home: it is the subdued voice of their culture. Then they hear a much louder voice, that of another archetypal figure, Rutherford, trumpeting: "This is the heroic age of science! This is the Elizabethan age!" Many of us heard that, and a good many other statements beside which that

was mild; and we weren't left in any doubt whom Rutherford was casting for the role of Shakespeare. What is hard for the literary intellectuals to understand, imaginatively or intellectually, is that he was absolutely right.

And compare "this is the way the world ends, not with a bang but a whimper" – incidentally, one of the least likely scientific prophecies ever made – compare that with Rutherford's famous repartee, "Lucky fellow, Rutherford, always on the crest of the wave." "Well, I made the wave, didn't I?"

The non-scientists have a rooted impression that the scientists are shallowly optimistic, unaware of man's condition. On the other hand, the scientists believe that the literary intellectuals are totally lacking in foresight, peculiarly unconcerned with their brother men, in a deep sense anti-intellectual, anxious to restrict both art and thought to the existential moment. And so on. Anyone with a mild talent for invective could produce plenty of this kind of subterranean back-chat. On each side there is some of it which is not entirely baseless. It is all destructive. Much of it rests on misinterpretations which are dangerous. I should like to deal with two of the most profound of these now, one on each side.

First, about the scientists' optimism. This is an accusation which has been made so often that it has become a platitude. It has been made by some of the acutest non-scientific minds of the day. But it depends upon a confusion between the individual experience and the social experience, between the individual condition of man and his social condition. Most of the scientists I have known well have felt – just as deeply as the non-scientists I have known well – that the individual condition of each of us is tragic. Each of us is alone: sometimes we escape from solitariness, through love or affection or perhaps creative moments, but those triumphs of life are pools of light we make for ourselves while the edge of the road is black: each of us dies alone. Some scientists I have known have had faith in revealed religion. Perhaps with them the sense of the tragic condition is not so strong. I don't know. With most people of deep feeling, however highspirited and happy they are, sometimes most with those who are happiest and most high-spirited, it seems to be

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right in the fibres, part of the weight of lift. That is as true of the scientists I have known best as of anyone at all.

But nearly all of them – and this is where the colour of hope genuinely comes in – would see no reason why, just because the individual condition is tragic, so must the social condition be. Each of us is solitary: each of us dies alone: all right, that's a fate against which we can't struggle – but there is plenty in our condition which is not fate, and against which we are less than human unless we do struggle.
Most of our fellow human beings, for instance, are underfed and die before their time. In the crudest terms, *that* is the social condition. There is a moral trap which comes through the insight into man's loneliness: it tempts one to sit back, complacent in one's unique tragedy, and let the others go without a meal.

As a group, the scientists fall into that trap less than others. They are inclined to be impatient to see if something can be done: and inclined to think that it can be done, until it's proved otherwise. That is their real optimism, and it's an optimism that the rest of us badly need.

In reverse, the same spirit, tough and good and determined to fight it out at the side of their brother men, has made scientists regard the other culture's social attitudes as contemptible. That is too facile: some of them are, but they are a temporary phase and not to be taken as representative. I remember being cross-examined by a scientist of distinction. "Why do most writers take on social opinions which would have been thought distinctly uncivilized and demode at the time of the Plantagenets? Wasn't that true of most of the famous twentiethcentury writers? Yeats, Pound, Wyndham Lewis, nine out of ten of those who have dominated literary sensibility in our time -weren't they not only politically silly, but politically wicked? Didn't the influence of all they represent bring Auschwitz that much nearer?"

I thought at the time, and I still think, that the correct answer was not to defend the indefensible. It was no use saying that Yeats, according to friends whose judgment I trust, was a man of singular magnanimity of character, as well as a great

poet. It was no use denying the facts, which are broadly true. The honest answer was that there is, in fact, a connection, which literary persons were culpably slow to see, between some kinds of early twentieth-century art and the most imbecile expressions of anti-social feeling [3].That was one reason, among many, why some of us turned our backs on the art and tried to hack out a new or different way for ourselves [4].

But though many of those writers dominated literary sensibility for a generation, that is no longer so, or at least to nothing like the same extent. Literature changes more slowly than science. It hasn't the same automatic corrective, and so its misguided periods are longer. But it is ill-considered of scientists to judge writers on the evidence of the period 1914-50.

Those are two of the misunderstandings between the two cultures. I should say, since I began to talk about them – the two cultures, that is – I have had some criticism. Most of my scientific acquaintances think that there is something in it, and so do most of the practising artists I know. But I have been argued with by non-scientists of strong down-to-earth interests. Their view is that it is an over-simplification, and that if one is going to talk in these terms there ought to be at least three cultures. They argue that, though they are not scientists themselves, they would share a good deal of the scientific feeling. They would have as little use – perhaps, since they knew more about it, even less use – for the recent literary culture as the scientists themselves. J. H. Plumb, Alan Bullock and some of my American sociological friends have said that they vigorously refuse to be corralled in a cultural box with people they wouldn't be seen dead with, or to be regarded as helping to produce a climate which would not permit of social hope.

I respect those arguments. The number 2 is a very dangerous number: that is why the dialectic is a dangerous process. Attempts to divide anything into two ought to be regarded with much suspicion. I have thought a long time about going in for further refinements: but in the end I have decided against. I was searching for something a little more than a dashing metaphor, a good deal less than a cultural

map: and for those purposes the two cultures is about right, and subtilising any more would bring more disadvantages than it's worth.

At one pole, the scientific culture really is a culture, not only in an intellectual but also in an anthropological sense. That is, its members need not, and of course often do not, always completely understand each other; biologists more often than not will have a pretty hazy idea of contemporary physics; but there are common attitudes, common standards and patterns of behaviour, common approaches and assumptions. This goes surprisingly wide and deep. It cuts across other mental patterns, such as those of religion or politics or class.

Statistically, I suppose slightly more scientists are in religious terms unbelievers, compared with the rest of the intellectual world—though there are plenty who are religious, and that seems to be increasingly so among the young. Statistically also, slightly more scientists are on the Left in open politics – though again, plenty always have called themselves conservatives; and that also seems to be more common among the young. Compared with the rest of the intellectual world, considerably more scientists in this country and probably in the U.S. come from poor families. [5]

Yet over a whole range of thought and behaviour, none of that matters very much. In their working, and in much of their emotional life, their attitudes are closer to other scientists than to non-scientists who in religion or politics or class have the same labels as themselves. If I were to risk a piece of shorthand, I should say that naturally they had the future in their bones.

They may or may not like it, but they have it. That was as true of the conservatives J.J. Thomson and Lindemann as of the radicals Einstein or Blackett: as true of the Christian A.H. Compton as of the materialist Bernal: of the aristocrats de Broglie or Russell as of the proletarian Faraday: of those born rich, like Thomas Merton or Victor Rothschild, as of Rutherford, who was the son of an odd-job handyman. Without thinking about it, they respond alike. That is what culture means.

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At the other pole, the spread of attitudes is wider. It is obvious that between the two, as one moves through intellectual society from the physicists to the literary intellectuals, there are all kinds of tones of feeling on the way. But I believe the pole of total incomprehension of science radiates its influence on all the rest. That total incomprehension gives, much more pervasively than we realize, living in it, an unscientific flavour to the whole 'traditional' culture, and that unscientific flavour is often, much more than we admit, on the point of turning anti-scientific. The feelings of one pole become the anti-feelings of the other. If the scientists have the future in their bones, then the traditional culture responds by wishing the future did not exist. [6] It is the traditional culture, to an extent remarkably little diminished by the emergence of the scientific one, which manages the western world.

This polarisation is sheer loss to us all. To us as people, and to our society. It is at the same time practical and intellectual and creative loss, and I repeat that it is false to imagine that those three considerations are clearly separable. But for a moment I want to concentrate on the intellectual loss.

The degree of incomprehension on both sides is the kind of joke which has gone sour. There are about fifty thousand working scientists in the country and about eighty thousand professional engineers or applied scientists. During the war and in the years since, my colleagues and I have had to interview somewhere between thirty to forty thousand of these—that is, about 25 percent. The number is large enough to give us a fair sample, though of the men we talked to most would still be under forty. We were able to find out a certain amount of what they read and thought about. I confess that even I, who am fond of them and respect them, was a bit shaken. We hadn't quite expected that the links with the traditional culture should be so tenuous, nothing more than a formal touch of the cap.

As one would expect, some of the very best scientists had and have plenty of energy and interest to spare, and we came across several who had read everything that literary people talk about. But that's very rare. Most of the rest, when one tried to probe for what books they had read, would modestly confess, "Well, I've *tried* a

bit of Dickens", rather as though Dickens were an extraordinarily esoteric, tangled and dubiously rewarding writer, something like Rainer Maria Rilke. In fact that is exactly how they do regard him: we thought that discovery, that Dickens had been transformed into the type-specimen of literary incomprehensibility, was one of the oddest results of the whole exercise.

But of course, in reading him, in reading almost any writer whom we should value, they are just touching their caps to the traditional culture. They have their own culture, intensive, rigorous, and constantly in action. This culture contains a great deal of argument, usually much more rigorous, and almost always at a higher conceptual level, than literary persons' arguments—even though the scientists do cheerfully use words in senses which literary persons don't recognise, the senses are exact ones, and when they talk about 'subjective', 'objective', 'philosophy' or 'progressive', [7] they know what they mean, even though it isn't what one is accustomed to expect.

Remember, these are very intelligent men. Their culture is in many ways an exacting and admirable one. It doesn't contain much art, with the exception, an important exception, of music. Verbal exchange, insistent argument. Long-playing records. Colour-photography. The ear, to some extent the eye. Books, very little, though perhaps not many would go so far as one hero, who perhaps I should admit was further down the scientific ladder than the people I've been talking about—who, when asked what books he read, replied firmly and confidently: "Books? I prefer to use my books as tools." It was very hard not to let the mind wander—what sort of tool would a book make? Perhaps a hammer? A primitive digging instrument?

Of books, though, very little. And of the books which to most literary persons are bread and butter, novels, history, poetry, plays, almost nothing at all. It isn't that they're not interested in the psychological or moral or social life. In the social life, they certainly are, more than most of us. In the moral, they are by and large the soundest group of intellectuals we have: there is a moral component right in the grain of science itself, and almost all scientists form their own judgments of the

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moral life. In the psychological they have as much interest as most of us, though occasionally I fancy they come to it rather late. It isn't that they lack the interests. It is much more that the whole literature of the traditional culture doesn't seem to them relevant to those interests. They are, of course, dead wrong. As a result, their imaginative understanding is less than it could be. They are self-impoverished.

But what about the other side? They are impoverished too—perhaps more seriously, because they are vainer about it. They still like to pretend that the traditional culture is the whole of 'culture', as though the natural order didn't exist. As though the exploration of the natural order was of no interest either in its own value or its consequences. As though the scientific edifice of the physical world was not, in its intellectual depth, complexity and articulation, the most beautiful and wonderful collective work of the mind of man. Yet most non-scientists have no conception of that edifice at all. Even if they want to have it, they can't. It is rather as though, over an immense range of intellectual experience, a whole group was tone-deaf. Except that this tone-deafness doesn't come by nature, but by training, or rather the absence of training.

As with the tone-deaf, they don't know what they miss. They give a pitying chuckle at the news of scientists who have never read a major work of English literature. They dismiss them as ignorant specialists. Yet their own ignorance and their own specialisation is just as startling. A good many times I have been present at gatherings of people who, by the standards of the traditional culture, are thought highly educated and who have with considerable gusto been expressing their incredulity at the illiteracy of scientists. Once or twice I have been provoked and have asked the company how many of them could describe the Second Law of Thermodynamics. The response was cold: it was also negative. Yet I was asking something which is about the scientific equivalent of *Have you read a work of Shakespare's?*

I now believe that if I had asked an even simpler question—such as, What do you mean by mass, or acceleration, which is the scientific equivalent of saying, *Can*

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you read?—not more than one in ten of the highly educated would have felt that I was speaking the same language. So the great edifice of modern physics goes up, and the majority of the cleverest people in the western world have about as much insight into it as their neolithic ancestors would have had.

Just one more of those questions, that my non-scientific friends regard as being in the worst of taste. Cambridge is a university where scientists and non-scientists meet every night at dinner. [8] About two years ago, one of the most astonishing discoveries in the whole history of science was brought off. I don't mean the sputnik—that was admirable for quite different reasons, as a feat of organisation and a triumphant use of existing knowledge. No, I mean the discovery at Columbia by Yang and Lee. It is a piece of work of the greatest beauty and originality, but the result is so startling that one forgets how beautiful the thinking is. It makes us think again about some of the fundamentals of the physical world. Intuition, common sense—they are neatly stood on their heads. The result is usually known as the non-conservation of parity. If there were any serious communication between the two cultures, this experiment would have been talked about at every High Table in Cambridge. Was it? I wasn't here: but I should like to ask the question.

There seems then to be no place where the cultures meet. I am not going to waste time saying that this is a pity. It is much worse than that. Soon I shall come to some practical consequences. But at the heart of thought and creation we are letting some of our best chances go by default. The clashing point of two subjects, two disciplines, two cultures—of two galaxies, so far as that goes—ought to produce creative chances. In the history of mental activity that has been where some of the break-throughs came. The chances are there now. But they are there, as it were, in a vacuum, because those in the two cultures can't talk to each other. It is bizarre how very little of twentieth-century science has been assimilated into twentieth-century art. Now and then one used to find poets conscientiously using scientific expressions, and getting them wrong—there was a time when 'refraction' kept

cropping up in verse in a mystifying fashion, and when 'polarised light' was used as though writers were under the illusion that it was a specially admirable kind of light. Of course, that isn't the way that science could be any good to art. It has got to be assimilated along with, and as part and parcel of, the whole of our mental experience, and used as naturally as the rest.

I said earlier that this cultural divide is not just an English phenomenon: it exists all over the western world. But it probably seems at its sharpest in England, for two reasons. One is our fanatical belief in educational specialisation, which is much more deeply ingrained in us than in any country in the world, west or east. The other is our tendency to let our social forms crystallize. This tendency appears to get stronger, not weaker, the more we iron out economic inequalities: and this is specially true in education. It means that once anything like a cultural divide gets established, all the social forces operate to make it not less rigid, but more so.

The two cultures were already dangerously separate sixty years ago; but a prime minister like Lord Salisbury could have his own laboratory at Hatfield, and Arthur Balfour had a somewhat more than amateur interest in natural science. John Anderson did some research in inorganic chemistry in Leipzig before passing first into the Civil Service, and incidentally took a spread of subjects which is now impossible. [9] None of that degree of interchange at the top of the Establishment is likely, or indeed thinkable, now. [10]

In fact, the separation between the scientists and non-scientists is much less bridgeable among the young than it was even thirty years ago. Thirty years ago the cultures had long ceased to speak to each other: but at least they managed a kind of frozen smile across the gulf. Now the politeness has gone, and they just make faces. It is not only that the young scientists now feel that they are part of a culture on the rise while the other is in retreat. It is also, to be brutal, that the young scientists know that with an indifferent degree they'll get a comfortable job, while their contemporaries and counterparts in English or History will be lucky to earn 60 percent as much. No young scientist of any talent would feel that he isn't wanted or

that his work is ridiculous, as did the hero of *Lucky Jim,* and in fact, some of the disgruntlement of Amis and his associates is the disgruntlement of the underemployed arts graduate.

There is only one way out of all this: it is, of course, by rethinking our education. In this country, for the two reasons I have given, that is more difficult than in any other. Nearly everyone will agree that our school education is too specialized. But nearly everyone feels that it is outside the will of man to alter it. Other countries are as dissatisfied with their education as we are, but are not so resigned.

The U.S. teach out of proportion more children up to eighteen than we do: they teach them far more widely, but nothing like so rigorously. They know that: they are hoping to take the problem in hand within ten years, though they may not have all that time to spare. The U.S.S.R. also teach out of proportion more children than we do: they also teach far more widely than we do (it is an absurd western myth that their school education is specialized) but much too rigorously. [11] They know that—and they are beating about to get it right. The Scandinavians, in particular the Swedes, who would make a more sensible job of it than any of us, are handicapped by their practical need to devote an inordinate amount of time to foreign languages. But they too are seized of the problem.

Are we? Have we crystallized so far that we are no longer flexible at all?

Talk to schoolmasters, and they say that our intense specialisation, like nothing else on earth, is dictated by the Oxford and Cambridge scholarship examinations. If that is so, one would have thought it not utterly impracticable to change the Oxford and Cambridge scholarship examinations. Yet one would underestimate the national capacity for the intricate defensive to believe that that was easy. All the lessons of our educational history suggest we are only capable of increasing specialisation, not decreasing it.

Somehow we have set ourselves the task of producing a tiny élite—far smaller proportionately than in any comparable country—educated in one academic skill.

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For a hundred and fifty years in Cambridge it was mathematics: then it was mathematics or classics: then natural science was allowed in. But still the choice had to be a single one.

It may well be that this process has gone too far to be reversible. I have given reasons why I think it is a disastrous process, for the purpose of a living culture. I am going on to give reasons why I think it is fatal, if we're to perform our practical tasks in the world. But I can think of only one example, in the whole of English educational history, where our pursuit of specialized mental exercises was resisted with success.

It was done here in Cambridge, fifty years ago, when the old order-of-merit in the Mathematical Tripos was abolished. For over a hundred years, the nature of the Tripos had been crystallising. The competition for the top places had got fiercer, and careers hung on them. In most colleges, certainly in my own, if one managed to come out as Senior or Second Wrangler, one was elected a Fellow out of hand. A whole apparatus of coaching had grown up. Men of the quality of Hardy, Littlewood, Russell, Eddington, Jeans, Keynes, went in for two or three years' training for an examination which was intensely competitive and intensely difficult. Most people in Cambridge were very proud of it, with a similar pride to that which almost anyone in England always has for our existing educational institutions, whatever they happen to be. If you study the flysheets of the time, you will find the passionate arguments for keeping the examination precisely as it was to all eternity: it was the only way to keep up standards, it was the only fair test of merit, indeed, the only seriously objective test in the world. The arguments, in fact, were almost exactly those which are used today with precisely the same passionate sincerity if anyone suggests that the scholarship examinations might conceivably not be immune from change.

In every respect but one, in fact, the old Mathematical Tripos seemed perfect. The one exception, however, appeared to some to be rather important. It was simply—so the young creative mathematicians, such as Hardy and Littlewood, kept

saying—that the rating had no intellectual merit at all. They went a little further, and said that the Tripos had killed serious mathematics in England stone dead for a hundred years. Well, even in academic controversy, that took some skirting round, and they got their way. But I have an impression that Cambridge was a good deal more flexible between 1850 and 1914 than it has been in our time. If we had had the old Mathematical Tripos firmly planted among us, should we have ever managed to abolish it?

Notes

1. "The Two Cultures", *New Statesman*, 6 October 1956
2. This lecture was delivered to a Cambridge audience, and so I used some points of reference which I did not need to explain. G. H. Hardy, 1877-1947, was one of the most distinguished pure mathematicians of his time, and a picturesque figure in Cambridge both as a young don and on his return in 1931 to the Sadleirian Chair of Mathematics.
3. I said a little more about this connection in *The Times Literary Supplement*, "Challenge to the Intellect", 15 August 1958. I hope some day to carry the analysis further.
4. It would be more accurate to say that, for literary reasons, we felt the prevailing literary modes were useless to us. We were, however, reinforced in that feeling when it occurred to us that those prevailing modes went hand in hand with social attitudes either wicked, or absurd, or both.
5. An analysis of the schools from which Fellows of the Royal Society come tells its own story. The distribution is markedly different from that of, for example, members of the Foreign Service or Queen's Counsel.
6. Compare George Orwell's *1984,* which is the strongest possible wish that the future should not exist, with J. D. Bernal's *World Without War.*
7. *Subjective*, in contemporary technological jargon, means 'divided according to subjects'. *Objective* means 'directed towards an object'. *Philosophy* means 'general intellectual approach or attitude' (for example, a scientist's 'philosophy of guided weapons' might lead him to propose certain kinds of 'objective research'). A *progressive* job means one with possibilities of promotion.
8. Almost all college High Tables contain Fellows in both scientific and non-scientific subjects.
9. He took the examination in 1905.

10. It is, however, true to say that the compact nature of the managerial layers of English society—the fact that 'everyone knows everyone else'—means that scientists and non-scientists do in fact know each other as people more easily than in most countries. It is also true that a good many leading politicians and administrators keep up lively intellectual and artistic interests to a much greater extent, so far as I can judge, than is the case in the U.S. These are both among our assets.

11. I tried to compare American, Soviet and English education in "New Minds for the New World", *New Statesman*, 6 September 1956.

1920 F.R. **LEAVIS.** (1895-1978)

Two Cultures? The Significance of C. P. Snow. The Richmond Lecture. written 1962.

F.R. Leavis's essay ***Two Cultures? The Significance of C. P. Snow.*** *The Richmond Lecture* was published by Chatto and Windus Ltd. 1962.

If confidence in oneself as a master-mind, qualified by capacity, insight and knowledge to pronounce authoritatively on the frightening problems of our civilisation, is genius, then there can be no doubt about Sir Charles Snow's. He has no hesitations. Of course, anyone who offers to speak with inwardness and authority on both science and literature will be conscious of more than ordinary powers, but one can imagine such consciousness going with a certain modesty – with a strong sense, indeed, of a limited range and a limited warrant. The peculiar quality of Snow's assurance expresses itself in a pervasive tone; a tone of which one can say that, while only genius could justify it, one cannot readily think of genius adopting it. It is the tone we have (in so far as it can be given in an isolated sentence) here:

> The only writer of world-class who seems to have had an understanding of the industrial revolution was Ibsen in his old age: and there wasn't much that old man didn't understand.

Clearly, there is still less Sir Charles Snow doesn't understand: he pays the tribute with authority. We take the implication and take it the more surely at its full value because it carries the *élan*, the essential inspiration, of the whole self-assured performance. Yet Snow is in fact portentously ignorant. No doubt he could himself

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pass with ease the tests he proposes for his literary friends with the intimation that *they* would fail them, and so expose themselves as deplorably less well educated in respect of science than he, though a scientist, can claim to be in respect of literature. I have no doubt that *he* can define a machine-tool and state the second law of thermodynamics. It is even possible, I suppose (though I am obliged to say that the evidence seems to me to be against it), that he could make a plausible show of being inward with the Contradiction of Parity, that esoteric upshot of highly subtle experiment which, he suggests, if things were well with our education, would have been a major topic at our High Tables. But of history, of the nature of civilisation and the history of its recent developments, of the human history of the Industrial Revolution, of the human significances entailed in that revolution, of literature, of the nature of that kind of collaborative human creativity of which literature is the type, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that Snow exposes complacently a complete ignorance.

The judgment I have to come out with is that not only is he not a genius; he is intellectually as undistinguished as it is possible to be. If that were all, and Snow were merely negligible, there would be no need to say so in any insistent public way, and one wouldn't choose to do it. But I used the adverb 'portentously' just now with full intention: Snow is a portent. He is a portent in that, being in himself negligible, he has become for a vast public on both sides of the Atlantic a master-mind and a sage. His significance is that he has been accepted – or perhaps the point is better made by saying 'created': he has been created as authoritative intellect by the cultural conditions manifested in his acceptance. Really distinguished minds are themselves, of course, *of* their age; they are responsive at the deepest level to its peculiar strains and challenges: that is why they are able to be truly illuminating and prophetic and to influence the world positively and creatively. Snow's relation to the age is of a different kind; it is characterised not by insight and spiritual energy, but by blindness, unconsciousness and automatism. He doesn't know what he means, and doesn't know he doesn't know. That is what his intoxicating sense of a message

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and a public function, his inspiration, amounts to. It is not any challenge he thinks of himself as uttering, but the challenge he *is,* that demands our attention. The commentary I have to make on him is necessarily drastic and dismissive; but don't, I beg, suppose that I am enjoying a slaughterous field-day. Snow, I repeat, is in himself negligible. My preoccupation is positive in spirit. Snow points to its nature when he turns his wisdom upon education and the university.

I have not been quick to propose for myself the duty of dealing with him: that will, I hope, be granted. *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution,* the Rede Lecture which established him as an Intellect and a Sage, was given at this ancient university in 1959. I turned over the pages of the printed lecture in the show-room of the Cambridge University Press, was struck by the mode of expression Snow found proper and natural, perceived plainly enough what kind of performance the lecture was, and had no inclination to lay down three and sixpence. To my surprise, however, it rapidly took on the standing of a classic. It was continually being referred to – and not only in the Sunday papers – as if Snow, that rarely qualified and profoundly original mind, had given trenchant formulation to a key contemporary truth. What brought me to see that I must overcome the inner protest, and pay my three and sixpence, was the realising, from marking scholarship scripts, that sixth-form masters were making their bright boys read Snow as doctrinal, definitive and formative – and a good examination investment.

Well, I bought the lecture last summer, and, having noted that it had reached the sixth printing, read it through. I was then for the first time in a position to know how mild a statement it is to say that *The Two Cultures* exhibits an utter lack of intellectual distinction and an embarrassing vulgarity of style. The lecture, in fact, with its show of giving us the easily controlled spontaneity of the great man's talk, exemplifies kinds of bad writing in such richness and so significant a way that there would, I grant, be some point in the schoolmaster's using it as a text for elementary criticism; criticism of the style, here, becomes, as it follows down into analysis, criticism of the thought, the essence, the pretensions.

The intellectual nullity is what constitutes any difficulty there may be in dealing with Snow's panoptic pseudo-cogencies, his parade of a thesis: a mind to be argued with – that is not there; what we have is something other. Take that crucial term 'culture,' without which and the work he relies on it to do for him Snow would be deprived of his seer's profundity and his show of a message. His use of it focuses for us (if I may be permitted what seems to me an apt paradox) the intellectual nullity; it confronts us unmistakably with the absence of the thought that is capable of posing problems (let alone answering them). **The general nature of his position and his claim to authority are well known: there are the two uncommunicating and mutually indifferent cultures, there is the need to bring them together, and there is C. P. Snow, whose place in history is that he has them both, so that we have in him the paradigm of the desired and necessary union.**

Snow is, of course, a – no, I can't say that; he isn't: Snow thinks of himself as a novelist. I don't want to discuss that aspect of him, but I can't avoid saying something. The widespread belief that he is a distinguished novelist (and that it should be widespread is significant of the conditions that produced him) has certainly its part in the success with which he has got himself accepted as a mind. The seriousness with which he takes himself as a novelist is complete – if seriousness can be so ineffably blank, so unaware. Explaining why he should have cut short a brilliant career (we are to understand) as a scientist, he tells us that it had always been his vocation to be a writer. And he assumes with a happy and undoubting matter-of-factness – the signs are unmistakable – that his sense of vocation has been triumphantly vindicated and that he is beyond question a novelist of a high order (of 'world-class' even, to adopt his own idiom). Confidence so astonishingly enjoyed might politely be called memorable – if one could imagine the memory of Snow the novelist long persisting; but it won't, it can't, in spite of the British Council's brochure on him (he is a British Council classic). I say 'astonishingly enjoyed,' for as a novelist he doesn't exist; he doesn't begin to exist. He can't be said to know what a novel is. The nonentity is apparent on every page of his fictions – consistently

manifested, whatever aspect of a novel one looks for. I am trying to remember where I heard (can I have dreamed it?) that they are composed for him by an electronic brain called Charlie, into which the instructions are fed in the form of the chapter-headings. However that may be, he – or the brain (if that's the explanation) – can't do any of the things the power to do which makes a novelist. He tells you what you are to take him as doing, but he can give you no more than the telling. When the characters are supposed to fall in love you are told they do, but he can't show it happening. Abundant dialogue assures you that this is the novelistic art, but never was dialogue more inept; to imagine it spoken is impossible. And Snow is helpless to suggest character in speech. He announces in his chapter-headings the themes and developments in which we are to see the significance of what follows, but what follows adds nothing to the effect of the announcement, and there is no more significance in the completed book than there is drama – or life. It is not merely that Snow can't make his characters live for us – that he lacks *that* creative power; the characters as he thinks of them are so impoverished in the interests they are supposed to have and to represent that even if they had been made to live, one would have asked of them, individually and in the lump: 'What of life is there here, and what significance capable of engaging an educated mind *could* be conveyed through such representatives of humanity?'

Among the most current novels of Snow's are those which offer to depict from the inside the senior academic world of Cambridge, and they suggest as characteristic of that world lives and dominant interests of such unrelieved and cultureless banality that, if one could credit Snow's art with any power of imaginative impact, one would say that he had done his university much harm – for this is a time when the image of the ancient university that is entertained at large matters immensely. Even when he makes a suspect piece of research central to his plot, as in that feeble exercise, *The Affair,* he does no more than a very incompetent manufacturer of whodunnits could do: no corresponding intellectual interest comes into the novel; science is a mere word, the vocation merely postulated. It didn't take

a brilliant research scientist to deal with the alleged piece of research as Snow deals with it – or a scientist of any kind. Both George Eliot and Lawrence could have made such a theme incomparably more real.

What the novelist really believes in, the experience he identifies his profoundest ego with because it makes him feel himself a distinguished man and a lord of life, is given us in Lewis Eliot. Eliot has inhabited **the Corridors of Power**; that is what really matters; that is what qualifies him to look down upon these dons, the scientists as well as the literary intellectuals, with a genially 'placing' wisdom from above; there we have the actual Snow, who, I repeat, is a portent of our civilisation; there we have the explanation of his confident sense of importance, which, in an extraordinary way, becomes where his writing is concerned a conviction of genius: he has known from inside **the Corridors of Power**. That he has really *been* a scientist, that science as such has ever, in any important inward way, existed for him, there is no evidence in his fiction.

And I have to say now that in *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* there is no evidence, either. The only presence science has is as a matter of external reference, entailed in a show of knowledgeableness. Of qualities that one might set to the credit of a scientific training there are none. As far as the internal evidence goes, the lecture was conceived and written by someone who had not had the advantage of an intellectual discipline of any kind. I was on the point of illustrating this truth from Snow's way with the term 'culture' – a term so important for his purposes. By way of enforcing his testimony that the scientists 'have their own culture,' he tells us: 'This culture contains a great deal of argument, usually much more rigorous, and almost always at a higher conceptual level, than literary persons' arguments.' But the argument of Snow's Rede Lecture is at an immensely *lower* conceptual level, and incomparably more loose and inconsequent, than any I myself, a literary person, should permit in a group discussion I was conducting, let alone a pupil's essay.

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Thought, it is true, in the field in which Snow challenges us, doesn't admit of control by strict definition of the key terms; but the more fully one realizes this the more aware will one be of the need to cultivate a vigilant responsibility in using them, and an alert consciousness of any changes of force they may incur as the argument passes from context to context. And what I have to say is that Snow's argument proceeds with so extreme a *naïveté* of unconsciousness and irresponsibility that to call it a movement of thought is to flatter it.

Take the confident ease of his way with what he calls 'the Literary Culture,' that one of his opposed pair which, as a novelist, he feels himself qualified to present to us with a peculiar personal authority. He identifies 'the Literary Culture' with, to use his own phrase, the 'literary intellectual' – by which he means the modish literary world; his 'intellectual' is the intellectual of the *New Statesman* circle and the reviewing in the Sunday papers. Snow accepts this 'culture' implicitly as the *haute culture* of our time; he takes it as representing the age's finer consciousness so far as a culture ignorant of science can. He, we are to understand, has it, and at the same time the scientific culture; he unites the two. I can't help remarking that this suggested equivalence (equivalence at any rate in reality) must constitute for me, a literary person, the gravest suspicion regarding the scientific one of Snow's two cultures. For his 'literary culture' is something that those genuinely interested in literature can only regard with contempt and resolute hostility. Snow's 'literary intellectual' is the enemy of art and life.

Note with what sublime, comic and frightening ease (for this sage is after all a Cambridge man) Snow, without any sense of there having been a shift, slips from his 'literary culture' into 'the traditional culture.' The feat of innocent unawareness is striking and significant enough when he is talking of the contemporary scene. But when, with the same ease, he carries the matter-of-fact identification into the past – 'the traditional culture,' he tells us, with reference to the Industrial Revolution, 'didn't notice: or when it did notice, didn't like what it saw'– the significance becomes so portentous as to be hardly credible. But Snow, we must remind

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ourselves, *is* frightening in his capacity of representative phenomenon. He knows nothing of history. He pronounces about it with as complete a confidence as he pronounces about literature (French, Russian and American as well as English), but he is equally ignorant of both. He has no notion of the changes in civilisation that have produced his 'literary culture' and made it possible for C. P. Snow to enjoy a status of distinguished intellectual, have the encouragement of knowing that his Rede Lecture is earnestly studied in sixth forms, and be (with practical consequences) an authority in the field of higher education: things that the real, the living 'traditional culture' (for there is a reality answering to that phrase) can no more countenance today that it could have foreseen them in the nineteenth century.

The intellectual nullity apparent in his way with the term 'culture' is only emphasised for us when, coming to his other culture, that of the scientist, he makes, as himself a scientist, his odd show of a concern for a 'high conceptual level.' 'At one pole,' he says, 'the scientific culture really is a culture, not only in an intellectual, but also in an anthropological sense.' The offered justification for that 'anthropological sense' is given, we find, if we examine the context, in this sentence: 'Without thinking about it they respond alike.' Snow adds: 'That is what a culture means.' We needn't bother one way or the other about the 'anthropological'; what is certain is that Snow gives us here a hint worth taking up. He, of course, is supposed to be thinking, and thinking profoundly, in that Rede Lecture, but actually it is a perfect document of the kind of 'culture,' to use his word, that he here defines – defines, even though unconscious of the full significance of what he says, the formal definition getting its completion and charge from the whole context – that is, from the actual performance. His unconsciousness is an essential characteristic. 'Without thinking, they respond alike': Snow's habits as an intellectual and a sage were formed in such a milieu. Thinking is a difficult art and requires training and practice in any given field. It is a pathetic and comic – and menacing – illusion on Snow's part that he is capable of thought on the problems he offers to advise us on. If his

lecture has any value for use in schools – or universities – it is as a document for the study of cliché.

We think of cliché commonly as a matter of style. But style is a habit of expression, and a habit of expression that runs to the cliché tells us something adverse about the quality of the thought expressed. 'History is merciless to failure': Snow makes play with a good many propositions of that kind – if 'proposition' is the right word. We call them clichés because, though Snow clearly feels that he is expressing thought, the thought, considered even for a moment, is seen to be a mere phantom, and Snow's illusion is due to the fact that he is *not* thinking, but resting inertly (though with a sense of power) on vague memories of the way in which he has heard (or seen) such phrases used. They carry for him – he belonging to what he calls a 'culture' – a charge of currency-value which is independent of first-hand, that is, actual, thinking. He would be surprised if he were told they are clichés.

He would be still more surprised to be told it is cliché when, describing the distinctive traits of his scientists, he says: 'they have the future in their bones.' He clearly feels that it has an idiosyncratic speech-raciness that gives his wisdom a genial authority. But it is basic cliché – for Snow's pretensions, more damagingly cliché than the kind of thing I instanced first, for it dismisses the issue, tacitly eliminates the problem, discussion of which would have been the *raison d'être* of the lecture if Snow had been capable of the preoccupation, and the accordant exercise of thought, he advertises.

Such a phrase as 'they have the future in their bones' (and Snow repeats it) cannot be explained as a meaningful proposition, and in that sense has no meaning. It emerges spontaneously from the cultural world to which Snow belongs and it registers uncritically (hence the self-evident force it has for him) its assumptions and attitudes and ignorances. That world, I was on the point of saying, is the world of his 'scientific culture,' but I might equally have said that it is the world of the *New Statesman*, the *Guardian* and the Sunday papers. And Snow rides on an advancing

swell of cliché: this exhilarating motion is what he takes for inspired and authoritative thought.

He brings out the intended commendatory force, and the actual large significance, of 'they have the future in their bones' (there is nothing else by way of clarification) by telling us antithetically of the representatives of 'the traditional culture': 'they are natural Luddites.' It is a *general* charge, and he makes quite plain that he includes in it the creators of English literature in the nineteenth century and the twentieth. The upshot is that if you insist on the need for any other kind of concern, entailing forethought, action and provision, about the human future – any other kind of misgiving – than that which talks in terms of productivity, material standards of living, hygienic and technological progress, then you are a Luddite. Snow's position, for all the mess of clichés and sentimental banalities that constitutes his style, is unequivocal.

It might seem an odd position for one who proudly thinks of himself as a major novelist. But I now come to the point when I have again to say, with a more sharply focused intention this time, that Snow not only hasn't in him the beginnings of a novelist; he is utterly without a glimmer of what creative literature is, or why it matters. That significant truth comes home to us, amusingly but finally, when, near his opening, he makes a point of impressing on us that, as himself a creative writer, he is humanly (shall I say?) supremely well qualified – that he emphatically *has* a soul. 'The individual condition of each of us,' he tells us, 'is tragic,' and, by way of explaining that statement, he adds, 'we die alone.' Once he says 'we live alone,' but in general – for he makes his point redundantly – he prefers to stress dying; it's more solemn. He is enforcing a superiority to be recognised in the scientists: they, he says, 'see no reason why, just because the individual condition is tragic, so must the social condition be.' For himself, with tragic stoicism, he says, 'we die alone: all right,' but – which is his message, the sum of his wisdom – 'there is social hope.'

He is repetitious, but he develops no explanation further than this. It doesn't occur to him that there is any need, stultifying as anyone capable of thought can see

the antithesis to be. What *is* the 'social condition' that has nothing to do with the 'individual condition'? What is the 'social hope' that transcends, cancels or makes indifferent the inescapable tragic condition of each individual? Where, if not in individuals, is what is hoped for – a *non*-tragic condition, one supposes – to be located? Or are we to find the reality of life in hoping for other people a kind of felicity about which as proposed for ourselves ('jam,' Snow calls it later – we die alone, but there's jam to be had first) we have no illusions? Snow's pompous phrases give us the central and supreme instance of what I have called 'basic cliché.' He takes over inertly – takes over as a self-evident simple clarity – the characteristic and disastrous confusion of the civilisation he is offering to instruct.

It is a confusion to which all creative writers are tacit enemies. The greatest English writer of our century dealt with it explicitly – dealt with it again and again, in many ways, and left to our hand what should be the classical exposure. But Snow, exhibiting his inwardness with modern literature by enumerating the writers who above all matter, leaves Lawrence out (though he offers us Wyndham Lewis – the brutal and boring Wyndham Lewis). Lawrence, intent with all his being on the nature and movement of the civilisation of the West, turned the intelligence of genius on what I have called the characteristic confusion. He diagnoses it in his supreme novel, *Women in Love*, both discursively and by the poetic means of a great novelist. Concerned with enforcing in relation to what may be called a quintessential presentment of the modern world the Laurentian maxim that 'nothing matters but life,' he insists on the truth that only in living individuals is life there, and individual lives cannot be aggregated or equated or dealt with quantitatively in any way.

The provocation for the insistence in the place I have in mind is given by the word 'equality,' and the context in which the word is introduced may be suggested by saying that the liberal-idealist sage and social philosopher, Sir Joshua Mattheson, who figures in *Women in Love,* reminds us irresistibly of Bertrand Russell (something of a paradigmatic hero for Snow, who is himself the spiritual son of H. G. Wells). The Lawrence-like Birkin of Lawrence's novel says: 'I want every man to have his

share in the world's goods, so that I am rid of his importunity . . .' The un-Laurentian tone given by 'rid' and 'importunity' belongs to the dramatic Birkin and the dramatic context, but in what Birkin has just said we have pure Lawrence: ' "We are all different and unequal in spirit – it is only the social differences that are based on accidental material conditions. We are all abstractly and mathematically equal, if you like. Every man has hunger and thirst, two eyes, one nose and two legs. We're all the same in point of number. But spiritually, there is pure difference and neither equality nor inequality counts." '

The point is intimately related to that which Lawrence makes when he says that few people live on the spot where they are – which is equivalent to saying that few people really live. Snow, in exhorting us to put aside our individual living and live instead on 'social hope,' preaches as the way of salvation the characteristic modern mode of refusing to live on the spot where one is. 'Live,' of course, is a word of many possible values, as great novelists and poets make us know. Snow, refraining from permitting himself a morbid consciousness of his individual tragedy, enjoys a personal life, I suspect, that gives him considerable satisfaction – being a sage, a familiar of the Corridors of Power, a member of the Athenæum, a great figure in the Sunday papers, a great novelist, a maker of young novelists, a maker (perhaps) of academic careers. He can hardly, for the myriads for whom he generously entertains 'social hope,' plan or foresee lives that will be filled with satisfaction and significance in that way. But what primarily calls for emphasis is the poverty of Snow's own ostensible range of satisfactions – which is a poverty of his own canons, and of his sense of significance; a poverty in considering which one finds oneself considering the inadequacy of his sense of human nature and human need.

The significance of his blankness in the face of literature is immense. It is a significance the more damning (in relation to his pretensions) because of the conviction with which he offers himself as an authority on the literature of the present and the past. I didn't exaggerate when I said that he doesn't know what literature is. Every pronouncement he makes about it – and he makes a great many –

enforces that truth. Illustrating his notion of the important kind of relation between art and life, the writer and the contemporary world, he tells us that the Russians (he knows all about Russian literature) 'are as ready to cope in art with the processes of production as Balzac was with the processes of craft manufacture.' But, for those preoccupied with the problems Snow confronts us with, unintentionally, literature has its immediate and crucial relevance because of the kind of writer who asks, who lives in his art and makes *us* live, kinds of question that, except as conventional profundities to which one should sometimes lift one's hat, seem never to have come within Snow's cognisance (an effect only emphasised by his 'tragic' and 'we die alone' – which belong, of course, to the most abject journalism). What for – what ultimately for? What, ultimately, do men live by? These questions are in and of the creative drive that produces great art in Conrad and Lawrence (to instance two very different novelists of the century who haven't, one gathers, impressed Snow).

Take, as a simple illustration, Conrad's *The Shadow Line,* and note – well, note everything, but note particularly the evocation of the young master's inner response when he first sets eyes on his ship, his first command. The urgent creative exploring represented by the questions is immeasurably more complex in *Women in Love,* a comprehensive and intensely 'engaged' study of modern civilisation. Of course, to such questions there can't be, in any ordinary sense of the word, 'answers,' and the effect as of total 'answer' differs as between Conrad and Lawrence, or as between any two great writers. But life in the civilisation of an age for which such creative questioning is not done and is not influential on general sensibility tends characteristically to lack a dimension: it tends to have no depth – no depth against which it doesn't tacitly protect itself by the habit of unawareness (so Snow enjoins us to do our living in the dimension of 'social hope'). In coming to terms with great literature we discover what at bottom we really believe. What for – what ultimately for? what do men live by – the questions work and tell at what I can only call a religious depth of thought and feeling. Perhaps, with my eye on the adjective, I may

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just recall for you Tom Brangwen, in *The Rainbow,* watching by the fold in lambing-time under the night-sky: 'He knew he did not belong to himself.'

It is characteristic of Snow that 'believe' for him should be a very simple word. 'Statistically,' he says, 'I suppose slightly more scientists are in religious terms unbelievers, compared with the rest of the intellectual world.' There are believers and unbelievers; we all know what 'religious terms' are; and everything relevant in relation to the adjective has been said. Snow goes on at once: 'Statistically, I suppose slightly more scientists are on the Left in open politics.' The *naïveté* is complete; it is a *naïveté* indistinguishable from the portentous ignorance. The ignorance is that which appears as historical ignorance in his account of the Industrial Revolution, and its consequences, in the nineteenth century. It manifests itself as a terrifying confidence of simplification – terrifying because of the distortions and falsifications it entails, and the part it plays in that spirit of practical wisdom about the human future of which Snow's Rede Lecture might be called a classic. Disposing with noble scorn of a wholly imaginary kind of opposition to his crass Wellsianism, he says (and *this* is his history – and his logic) : 'For, with singular unanimity, in any country where they have had the chance, the poor have walked off the land into the factories as fast as the factories could take them.' This, of course, is mere brute assertion, callous in its irresponsibility. But it is essential to Snow's wisdom. If one points out that the actual history has been, with significance for one's apprehension of the full human problem, incomparably and poignantly more complex than that, Snow dismisses one as a 'natural Luddite.' He dismisses so – sees no further significance in – Dickens and Ruskin, and all the writers leading down to Lawrence. Yet – to confine myself to the non-creative writer, about whom the challenged comment is most easily made – it was Ruskin who put into currency the distinction between wealth and well-being, which runs down through Morris and the British Socialist movement to the Welfare State.

But for Ruskin 'well-being' or 'welfare' could not conceivably be matters of merely material standard of living, with the advantages of technology and scientific

hygiene. And there we have the gap – the gap that is the emptiness beneath Snow's ignorance – between Snow and not only Ruskin, but the great creative writers of the century before Snow: they don't exist for him; nor does civilisation. Pressing on this ancient university his sense of the urgency of the effort to which we must give ourselves, he says: 'Yet' – in spite, that is, of the 'horror' which, he says, is 'hard to look at straight' – 'yet they've proved that common men can show astonishing fortitude in chasing jam tomorrow. Jam today, and men aren't at their most exciting: jam tomorrow, and one often sees them at their noblest. The transformations have also proved something which only the scientific culture can take in its stride. Yet, when we don't take it in our stride, it makes us look silly.'

The callously ugly insensitiveness of the mode of expression is wholly significant. It gives us Snow, who is wholly representative of the world, or culture, to which it belongs. It is the world in which Mr Macmillan said – or might, taking a tip from Snow, have varied his phrase by saying – 'You never had so much jam'; and in which, if you are enlightened, you see that the sum of wisdom lies in expediting the processes which will ensure the Congolese, the Indonesians, and Bushmen (no, not the Bushmen – there aren't enough of them), the Chinese, the Indians, *their* increasing supplies of jam. It is the world in which the vital inspiration, the creative drive, is 'Jam tomorrow' (if you haven't any today) or (if you have it today) '*More* jam tomorrow.' It is the world in which, even at the level of the intellectual weeklies, 'standard of living' is an ultimate criterion, its raising an ultimate aim, a matter of wages and salaries and what you can buy with them, reduced hours of work, and the technological resources that make your increasing leisure worth having, so that productivity – the supremely important thing – must be kept on the rise, at whatever cost to protesting conservative habit.

Don't mistake me. I am not preaching that we should defy, or try to reverse, the accelerating movement of external civilisation (the phrase sufficiently explains itself, I hope) that is determined by advancing technology. Nor am I suggesting that Snow, in so far as he is advocating improvements in scientific education, is wrong (I

suspect he isn't very original). What I *am* saying is that such a concern is not enough – disastrously not enough. Snow himself is proof of that, product as he is of the initial cultural consequences of the kind of rapid change he wants to see accelerated to the utmost and assimilating all the world, bringing (he is convinced), provided we are foresighted enough to perceive that no one now will long consent to be without abundant jam, salvation and lasting felicity to all mankind.

It must be recognised, though, that he doesn't *say* 'salvation' or 'felicity,' but 'jam.' And if 'jam' means (as it does) the prosperity and leisure enjoyed by our well-to-do working class, then the significant fact not noticed by Snow is that the felicity it represents cannot be regarded by a fully human mind as a matter for happy contemplation. Nor is it felt by the beneficiaries to be satisfying. I haven't time to enlarge on this last point. I will only remark that the observation is not confined to 'natural Luddites': I recently read in the *Economist* a disturbed review of a book by a French sociologist of which the theme is (not a new idea to us) the incapacity of the industrial worker, who – inevitably – looks on real living as reserved for his leisure, to use his leisure in any but essentially passive ways. And this, for me, evokes that total vision which makes Snow's 'social hope' unintoxicating to many of us – the vision of our imminent tomorrow in today's America: the energy, the triumphant technology, the productivity, the high standard of living and the life-impoverishment – the human emptiness; emptiness and boredom craving alcohol – of one kind or another. Who will assert that the average member of a modern society is more fully human, or more alive, than a Bushman, an Indian peasant, or a member of one of those poignantly surviving primitive peoples, with their marvellous art and skills and vital intelligence?

But I will come to the explicit positive note that has all along been my goal (for I am not a Luddite) in this way: the advance of science and technology means a human future of change so rapid and of such kinds, of tests and challenges so unprecedented, of decisions and possible non-decisions so momentous and insidious in their consequences, that mankind – this is surely clear– will need to be in full

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intelligent possession of its full humanity (and 'possession' here means, not confident ownership of that which belongs to *us* – our property, but a basic living deference towards that to which, opening as it does into the unknown and itself unmeasurable, we know we belong). I haven't chosen to say that mankind will need all its traditional wisdom; that might suggest a kind of conservatism that, so far as I am concerned, is the enemy. What we need, and shall continue to need not less, is something with the livingness of the deepest vital instinct; as intelligence, a power – rooted, strong in experience, and supremely human – of **creative response to the new challenges of time;** something that is alien to either of Snow's cultures.

His blankness comes out when, intimating (he supposes) that his concern for university reform envisages the total educational function, he tells us how shocking it is that educated people should not be able to appreciate the Shakespeare of science. It simply hasn't occurred to him that to call the master scientific mind (say Rutherford) a Shakespeare is nothing but a cheap journalistic infelicity. He enforces his intention by telling us, after reporting the failure of his literary friends to describe the second law of thermodynamics: 'yet I was asking something which is about the equivalent of *Have you read a work of Shakespeare's?*' There *is* no scientific equivalent of that question; equations between orders so disparate are meaningless – which is not to say that the Neo-Wellsian assurance that proposes them hasn't *its* significance. More largely, Snow exclaims: 'As though the scientific edifice of the physical world were not, in its intellectual depth, complexity and articulation, the most beautiful and wonderful collective work of the mind of man.'

It is pleasant to think of Snow contemplating, daily perhaps, the intellectual depth, complexity and articulation in all their beauty. But there is a prior human achievement of collaborative creation, a more basic work of the mind of man (and more than the mind), one without which the triumphant erection of the scientific edifice would not have been possible: that is, the creation of the human world, including language. It is one we cannot rest on as on something done in the past. It lives in the living creative response to change in the present. I mentioned language

because it is in terms of literature that I can most easily make my meaning plain, and because of the answer that seems to me called for by Snow's designs on the university. It is in the study of literature, the literature of one's own language in the first place, that one comes to recognise the nature and priority of the third realm (as, unphilosophically, no doubt, I call it, talking with my pupils), the realm of that which is neither merely private and personal nor public in the sense that it can be brought into the laboratory or pointed to. You cannot point to the poem; it is 'there' only in the re-creative response of individual minds to the black marks on the page. But – a necessary faith – it is something in which minds can meet. The process in which this faith is justified is given fairly enough in an account of the nature of criticism. A judgment is personal or it is nothing; you cannot take over someone else's. The implicit form of a judgment is: This is so, isn't it? The question is an appeal for confirmation that the thing *is* so; implicitly that, though expecting, characteristically, an answer in the form, 'yes, but—' the 'but' standing for qualifications, reserves, corrections. Here we have a diagram of the collaborative-creative process in which the poem comes to be established as something 'out there,' of common access in what is in some sense a public world. It gives us, too, the nature of the existence of English literature, a living whole that can have its life only in the living present, in the creative response of individuals, who collaboratively renew and perpetuate what they participate in – a cultural community or consciousness. More, it gives us the nature in general of what I have called the 'third realm' to which all that makes us human belongs.

Perhaps I need say no more by way of enforcing my conviction that, for the sake of our humanity – our humanness, for the sake of a human future, we must do, with intelligent resolution and with faith, all we can to maintain the full life in the present – and life is growth – of our transmitted culture. Like Snow I look to the university. Unlike Snow, I am concerned to make it really a university, something (that is) more than a collocation of specialist departments – to make it a **centre of human consciousness: perception, knowledge, judgment and responsibility**. And

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perhaps I have sufficiently indicated on what lines I would justify my seeing the centre of a university in a vital English School. I mustn't say more now about what I mean by that, I will only say that the academic is the enemy and that the academic *can* be beaten, as we who ran *Scrutiny* for twenty years proved. We were, and knew we were, Cambridge – the essential Cambridge in spite of Cambridge: that gives you the spirit of what I have in mind. Snow gets on with what he calls 'the traditional culture' better than I do. To impress us with his anti-academic astringency, he tells us of the old Master of Jesus who said about trains running into Cambridge on Sunday: 'It is equally displeasing to God and to myself.' More to the point is that *that*, I remember, was very much the attitude of the academic powers when, thirty years ago, I wrote a pioneering book on modern poetry that made Eliot a key figure and proposed a new chart, and again when I backed Lawrence as a great writer.

It is assumed, I believe, that work in the scientific departments must be in close touch with the experimental-creative front. In the same way, for the university English School there is a creative front with which, of its function and nature, the School must be in the closest relation. I am not thinking of the fashionable idea that the right qualification for a teaching post is to be a poet – or a commercially successful novelist. I am thinking again of what *Scrutiny* stood – and stands – for: of the creative work it did on the contemporary intellectual-cultural frontier in maintaining the critical function. I must not try now to say more about the way in which such a school would generate in the university a centre of consciousness (and conscience) for our civilisation. I will merely insist that it is not inconceivable that Cambridge might become a place where the culture of the Sunday papers was not taken to represent the best that is thought and known in our time.

If so, it is conceivable, perhaps, that the journalistic addiction of our academic intellectuals – and journalism (in one form or another) is now the menacing disease of university 'English' – might, at Cambridge, be pretty generally recognised for the thing it is. In such a Cambridge the attention I have paid to a Snow would be unnecessary.

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1942. Anthony **BURGESS**. (1917-1992)

Grunts form a Sexist Pig. written ?1986.

Cleaning out my son's bedroom the other day (he has gone to Paris to work as an apprentice fish chef in the all-male kitchens of Le Fouquet) I came across a partly eaten pig in pink marzipan. It had come, apparently, in the Christmas mail and was so ill-wrapped that neither its provenance nor purpose was apparent. My son thought it was an eccentric gift from one of his friends. Now, quite by chance, I discover (a matter of an old *Punch* in a thanatologist's waiting room) that it was a trophy sent by the Female Publishers of Great Britain to myself as one of the Sexist Pigs of the year. I forget who the others were, but I think one of them published a picture book on the beauty of the female breast. What my own sin against woman was I am not sure, but I'm told that it may have been a published objection to the name the Virago Press (women publishers publishing women) had chosen for itself.

Now all my dictionaries tell me that a virago is a noisy, violent, ill-tempered woman, a scold or a shrew. There is, true, an archaic meaning which makes a virago a kind of amazon, a woman strong, brave and warlike. But the etymology insists on a derivation from Latin *vir*, a man, and no amount of semantic twisting can force the word into a meaning which denotes intrinsic female virtues as opposed to ones

borrowed from the other sex. I think it was a silly piece of naming, and it damages what is a brave and valuable venture. The Virago Press has earned my unassailable gratitude for reprinting the *Pilgrimage* of Dorothy Richardson, and I said so publicly. But I get from its warlike officers only a rude and stupid insult, and I cannot laugh it off. Women should not behave like that, nor men either.

It has already been said, perhaps too often, that militant organizations pleading the rights of the supposedly oppressed – blacks, homosexuals, women – begin with reason but soon fly from it. On this basic level of language they claim the right to distort words to their own ends. I object to the delimitation of 'gay'. American blacks are not the only blacks in the world: the Tamils of India and Sri Lanka are far blacker. 'Chauvinistic' stands for excessive patriotism and not for other kinds of sectional arrogance. 'Pig' is an abusive word which libels a clean and tasty animal: it is silly, and it can be ignored. But 'sexist' is intended to have a precise meaning, and, on learning that I was a sexist pig, I felt it necessary to start thinking about the term.

As far as I can make out, one *ought* to be a sexist if one preaches or practices discrimination of any kind towards members of the other sex. In practice, a sexist is always male, and his sexism consists in his unwillingness to accept the world view of women in one or other or several or all of its aspects. This means, in my instance, that if I will not accept the meaning the Virago Press imposes on its chosen name, I qualify, by feministic logic, for the pink pig. But I cannot really believe it is as simple as that. The feminists must have other things against me but none of them will speak out and say what they are.

In the *Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Writing*, Elizabeth Janeway, discussing women's literature, considers a book by Mary Ellmann called *Thinking About Women*. She says: 'It is worth being reminded of how widespread and how respectable has been the unquestioned assumption of women's inevitable, innate, and significant "otherness", and Ellmann here collects utterances on the subject not only from those we might expect (Norman Mailer, Leslie Fiedler, Anthony Burgess)

but from Robert Lowell, Malamud, Beckett, and Reinhold Niebuhr.' Note both the vagueness and the obliqueness. There can be no vaguer word in the world than 'otherness'. The vagueness is a weapon. Since it is not defined, the term 'otherness' can mean whatever its users wish, rather like 'virago'. The position of people like Mailer and Burgess and Fiedler vis-à-vis this 'otherness' does not have to be defined either: we have an intuitive knowledge of their qualities, and, between women, no more need be said.

That women are 'other', meaning different from men, is one of the great maxims of the feminists. They are biologically different, think and feel differently. But men must not say so, for with men the notion of difference implies a value judgement: women are not like us, therefore they must be inferior to us. I myself have never said or written or even thought this. What I am prepared to see as a virtue in myself (as also in Mailer and Fiedler and other pigs) is – because of the feminist insistence on this damnable otherness – automatically transformed by such women as read into a vice. I mean the fact that I admire women, love the qualities in them that are different from my own male ones, but will not be seduced by their magic into accepting their values in areas where only neutral values should apply. Here, of course, the trouble lies. Women don't believe there are neutral zones: what males call neutral they call male.

I believe, for instance, that in matters of art we are in a zone where judgements have nothing to do with sex. In considering the first book the Virago Press brought out – the masterpiece of Dorothy Richardson – I did not say that here we had a great work of women's literature, but rather here we had a great work which anticipated some of the innovations of James Joyce. I should have stressed that this was a work by a woman, and the womanly aspect of the thing didn't seem to me to be important. I believe that the sex of an author is irrelevant, because any good writer contains both sexes. But what we are hearing a lot of now, especially in American colleges, is the heresy that *Madame Bovary* and *Anna Karenina* can't be good portraits of women because they are written by men. These are not aesthetic

judgements: they are based on an a priori position which refuses to be modified by looking at the facts. The feminists just don't want men to be able to understand women. On the other hand, women are quite sure they understand men, and nobody finds fault with the male creations of the Brontës or of Jane Austen.

Let's get out of literature and into life. I think I am quite capable of seeing the feminist point of view with regard to men's sexual attitude to women. I am strongly aware of the biological polarity, and it intrudes where women say it shouldn't. I am incapable of having *neutral* dealings with a woman. Consulting a woman doctor or lawyer, shaking hands with a woman prime minister, listening to a sermon by a woman minister of religion, I cannot help letting the daydream of a possible sexual relashionship intrude. That this diminishes the woman in question I cannot deny. It depersonalizes her, since the whole sexual process necessarily involves depersonalization: this is nature's fault, not man's. Women object to their reduction into 'sex objects', but this is what nature decrees when the erotic process gets to work. While writing this I am intermittently watching a most ravishing lady on French television. She is talking about Kirkegaard, but I am not taking much of that in. Aware of her charms as she must be, she ought to do what that beautiful lady professor of mathematics did at the University of Bologna in the Middle Ages – talk from behind a screen, meaning talk on the radio. But then the voice itself, a potent sex signal, would get in the way.

This awareness of the sexual power of women, I confess, induces attitudes which are, from the feminist angle, unworthy. At Brown's Hotel a woman porter proposed carrying my bags upstairs. It was her job, she said, but I could not let her do it. Old as I am, I still give up my seat to women far younger when on a bus or tube train. This is a protective tenderness wholly biological in origin. How can I apologise for it when it is built into my glands? Women are traditionally (but this is, I admit, possibly a man-imposed tradition) slower to be sexually moved than are men, and this enables them to maintain a neutral relationship with the other sex in offices and consulting rooms.

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I believe what women tell me to believe – namely, that they can do anything men can do except impregnate and carry heavy loads (though this latter was contradicted by the girl at Brown's Hotel). Nevertheless, I have to carry this belief against weighty evidence to the contrary. Take music, for instance. Women have never been denied professional music instruction – indeed, they used to be encouraged to have it – but they have not yet produced a Mozart or a Beethoven. I am told by feminists that all this will change some day, when women have learned how to create like *women* composers, a thing men have prevented their doing in the past. This seems to me to be nonsense, and it would be denied by composers like Thea Musgrave and the shade of the late Dame Ethel Smyth (a great feminist herself, the composer of *The March of the Women* as well as *The Wreckers* and *The Prison*, which the liberationists ought to do something about reviving). I believe that artistic creativity is a male surrogate for biological creativity, and that if women do so well in literature it may be that literature is, as Mary McCarthy said, closer to gossip than to art. But no one will be happier than I to see women produce the greatest art of all time, so long as women themselves recognise that the art is more important than the artist.

I see that most, if not all, of what I say above is likely to cause feminist rage and encourage further orders to pink-pig manufacturers (did the Virago Press search for a *woman* confectioner?). But, wearily, I recognise that anything a man says is liable to provoke womanly hostility in these bad and irrational times. A man, by his very nature, is incapable of saying the right thing to a woman unless he indues the drag of hypocrisy. Freud, bewildered, said: 'What does a woman *want*?' I don't think, despite the writings of Simone de Beauvoir, Caroline Bird, Sara Evans, Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer, Elizabeth Janeway, Kate Millett, Juliet Mitchell, Sarah B. Pomeroy, Marian Ramelson, Alice Rossi, Sheila Rowbotham, Dora Russell, Edith Thomas, Mary Wollstonecraft and the great Virginia herself, the question has yet been answered, except negatively. What women *don't* want is clear – their subjection to the patriarchal image, male sexual exploitation, and all the rest of it. When

positive programmes emerge – like the proposed 'desexualization' of language – we men have an uneasy intimation of the possible absurdity of the whole militant movement. I refuse to say Ms, which is not a real vocable, and I object to 'chairperson' and the substitution of 'ovarimony' to 'testimony'. And I maintain (a) that a virago is a detestable kind of woman and (b) that feminist militancy should not condone bad manners. If that pink pig had not been thrown in the garbage bin I should tell the women publishers of Britain what to do with it.

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APPENDIX.

C. George Sandulescu

English Literature:
The "Plus-25" Author Chronology.

(2000.02.15)

THE "PLUS-25" AUTHOR CHRONOLOGY.
an old man's Listing:

I have always wanted to know, exactly and precisely, how long an author had lived, and his likely company when he had barely completed his formative years.
Now I have found a device by means of which my lifelong dream has been fulfilled.
Certain half-decades, ie: batches of five years, eg: 1840-45, are ever so rich in famous names…

¬1368.	Geoffrey CHAUCER.	b 1343.	d 1400.
¬1502.	Sir Thomas More.	b 1477.	d 1535.
¬1577.	Edmund SPENSER.	b c1552.	d 1599.
¬1586.	Sir Francis BACON.	b 1561.	d 1626.
¬1589.	Christopher MARLOWE(29y).	b 1564.	d 1593.
¬1589.	William SHAKESPEARE.	b 1564.(fp1591: H6)	d 1616.

¬1597.	John DONNE.	b 1572.	d 1631.
¬1604.	John FLETCHER.	b 1579.	d 1625.
¬1609.	Sir Francis BEAUMONT.	b 1584.	d 1616.
¬1618.	Izaak WALTON.	b 1593.(1653:cAngler)	d 1683.
¬1633.	John MILTON.	b 1608.	d 1674.
¬1645.	John EVELYN.	b 1620.(Diary fp 1818)	d 1706.
¬1646.	Andrew MARVELL.	b 1621.	d 1678.
¬1658.	Samuel PEPYS.(70y)	b 1633.	d 1703.
¬1685.	Daniel DEFOE.	b 1660.	d 1731.
¬1692.	Jonathan SWIFT(78y).	b 1667.(fp	d 1745.
¬1697.	Joseph ADDISON.	b 1672.	d 1719.
¬1697.	Richard STEELE.	b 1672.	d 1729.
¬1732.	Henry FIELDING.	b 1707.	d 1754.
¬1734.	Dr (Samuel) JOHNSON.	b 1709.(Dict: ?)	d 1784.
¬1738.	Laurence STERNE.	b 1713.	d 1768
¬1746.	Tobias SMOLLETT.	b 1721.	d 1771.
¬1756.	William COWPER.	b 1731.	d 1800.
¬1762.	Edward GIBBON.	b 1737.	d 1794.
¬1765.	James BOSWELL.	b 1740.	d 1795.
¬1776.	Brindsley SHERIDAN.	b 1751.	d 1816.
¬1784.	William BECKFORD.	b 1737.	d 1844.

¬1797.	Samuel T.COLERIDGE.	b 1772.	d 1834.
¬1800.	Jane AUSTEN(42y).	b 1775.	d 1817.
¬1800.	Charles LAMB(59y).	b 1775.	d 1834.
¬1803.	William HAZLITT.	b 1778.	d 1830.
¬1810.	Thomas DE QUINCEY.	b 1785.	d 1859.
¬1813.	George Gordon, Lord BYRON.	b 1788.	d 1824.
¬1817.	Percy Bysshe SHELLEY(30y).	b 1792.	d 1822.
¬1820.	Thomas CARLYLE.	b 1795.	d 1881.
¬1828.amer.	Ralph W. EMERSON(79y).	b 1803.	d 1882.
¬1828.	Edward BULWER-LYTTON.	b 1803.	d 1873.
¬1829.	DISRAELI. Lord Beaconsfield.	b 1804.	d 1881.
¬1831.	E. BARRETT-BROWNING(55y).	b 1806.	d 1861.
¬1834.	Alfred, Lord TENNYSON.	b 1809.	d. 1892
¬1836.	W.M.THACKERAY.	b 1811.(fp	d 1863.
¬1837.	Charles DICKENS(58y).	b 1812.(fp1836: Boz)	d 1870.
¬1837.	Robert BROWNING(77y).	b 1812.(fp? lp?)	d 1889.
txt1838-49	The Mabinogion.		
¬1840.	Anthony TROLLOPE.	b 1815.	d 1882.
¬1841.	Charlotte BRONTE.	b 1816.	d 1855.
¬1842.amer.	H.D. THOREAU(45y).	b 1817.	d 1862.
¬1843.	Emily BRONTE.	b 1818.	d 1848.
¬1843.	George ELIOT.	b 1818.	d 1880.
¬1844.	John RUSKIN.	b 1819.	d 1900.
¬1860.	Samuel BUTLER.	b 1835 (Erewhon 1872)	d 1902.
¬1860.amer.	Mark TWAIN(pseudo)	b 1835.	d 1910.
¬1862.	Algernon SWINBURNE.	b 1837.	d 1909.
¬1865.	Thomas HARDY.	b 1840.	d 1928.
¬1869.	G.M. HOPKINS.	b 1844.	d 1889.

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¬1875.	R.L.STEVENSON.	b 1850.	d 1894.
¬1879.	Oscar WILDE.	b 1854 (Earnest'95).	d 1900.
¬1884.	Conan DOYLE.	b 1859.	d 1930.
¬1891.	H.G. WELLS(80y).	b 1866.	d 1946.
¬1899.	G.K. CHESTERTON(60y).	b 1874.	d 1936.
¬1907.	V. WOOLF(59y).	b 1882.	d 1941.
¬1910.	D.H. LAWRENCE(45y).	b 1885.	d 1930.

# #

¬1916.amer.	Henry MILLER(89y).	b 1891.	d 1980.
¬1922.amer.	Thornton WILDER(78y).	b 1897.	d 1975.
¬1957.amer.	John UPDIKE.	b 1932.	d

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